

THE ART OF SURPRISE

PHILIP TRUSTTUM:
DEVELOPMENT AND STYLE.

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN ART HISTORY
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY
BY
HELEN JOY TAYLOR.

UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY
1992.

ND
1108
T87
T242
1992

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

First, I especially wish to thank Philip Trusttum for his patience, interest and co-operation, and Jonathan Mané-Wheoki for both his guidance and encouragement throughout the preparation of this thesis.

Particular thanks are due to the C. S. A. Gallery, Christchurch, for its generosity in awarding me the Canterbury Society of Arts Research Grant at a time when it was greatly needed.

I am also grateful to the following individuals, galleries, and museums for both their time and informative response to my enquiries. Their contribution towards my research has been invaluable: Bill Milbank, Director, Richard Wotton, Photographer, and Celia Thompson, Registrar, Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui; Linda Tyler, formerly Curator of Art Collections, and David Cook, Photographer, Waikato Museum of Art and History, Hamilton; Geraldine Taylor, Registrar, Ron Brownson, Curator of Research Collections, Christina Barton, Assistant Curator of Collections, Auckland City Art Gallery; Robert Leonard, Curator of Contemporary New Zealand Art, Jane Vial, Research Assistant, Fritha Marriage, Assistant Registrar, and Jenny Harper, Acting Director, National Art Gallery, Wellington; Barbara Maré, Registrar / Collections Manager, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth; Jo Torr, Registrar, Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North; Grant Banbury, Exhibitions Officer, C. S. A. Gallery, Christchurch; Neil Roberts, Curator, Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch; Meg Parkin, Director, Aigantighe Art Gallery, Timaru; Paula Newton, formerly Registrar, and J. M. Grogan, Registrar, Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt. Austin Davies, Director, Bishop Suter Art Gallery, Nelson.

I would also like to thank Dr. Michael Dunn, Senior Lecturer in Art History, Auckland University; Barry Hopkins, Hamilton; Simon Perkins, Christchurch; and Marilyn Hooper, Photographic Department, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, for their time and assistance.

A special thank you goes to my sister for her advice and help in the preparation of the final manuscript for printing; to my mother who has supported and endured my preoccupation with the History of Art; and to Benjamin Brown for 'being there'.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to my late father, Brian G. Taylor. The memory of his unfailing belief in me has been an inspiration.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements	i
Table of Contents	iii
List of Plates	iv
ABSTRACT	1
INTRODUCTION	3
CHAPTER ONE: THE FORMATIVE YEARS 1940 - 1964	8
CHAPTER TWO: BECOMING ESTABLISHED 1964 - 1972	37
CHAPTER THREE: CHANGE AND RENEWAL 1972 - 1980	66
CHAPTER FOUR: NEW BEGINNINGS 1980 - 1986	106
CHAPTER FIVE: CONTINUING TO SURPRISE 1986 - 1990	133
CHAPTER SIX: RE-DEFINING TRUSTTUM	158
CONCLUSION	181
BIBLIOGRAPHY	184
CATALOGUE OF WORKS 1962 - 1990.	

LIST OF PLATES

1. *Ashley Paintings*, (1962).
2. *No*, (c.1964-65).
3. *Woman*, (1965).
4. *Martin's Playtime*, (1966).
5. *The Battle Plan for Genghis Khan*, (c.1968-69).
6. *The Green Fireplace (No.4)*, (1969).
7. *Flower*, (1970).
8. *Curtain*, (c.1970-71).
9. *Constructions*, (1972).
10. *Red Berries and Blue Sky*, (1973).
11. *Interior and Hedge*, (c.1974).
12. *Hannah on the Rocking Horse*, (1974).
13. *Joker*, (1975).
14. *Homage to Avis*, (1976).
15. *Patience II*, (1976).
16. *Hannah off to School at the Age of Five*, (c.1976-77).
17. *Ticket*, (c.1978).
18. *Darts*, (c.1978-79).
19. *Car Drawings*, (1980).
20. *L-24 1/4"*, (c.1981-82).
21. *Dreaming*, (1983).
22. *4:15*, (1983).
23. *Book of Dreams*, (1984).
24. *Woman, From My View*, (1985).
25. *Slightly Altered*, (c.1985-86).

26. *Dimorphotheca*, (1986).
27. *Untitled (Cropping Horse Studies)*, (1987).
28. *Jewelled Horse*, (c.1987-88).
29. *Over Poles*, (1988).
30. *2 Faced*, (1988).
31. *Me*, (1989).
32. *Cutting Tail*, (1990).
33. *Cutting Canvas*, (1990).
34. *Digging*, (1990).
35. *Glimpse*, (1990).

ABSTRACT

In 1990 Philip Trusttun was described as 'probably the most multi-faceted painter New Zealand has'.¹ To date there exists no thorough survey of his artistic development and style. As a result critics and art historians appear not to be fully aware of what Trusttun has done, or sure about what kind of artist he is. The aim of this thesis is to offer an overview of Trusttun's art, to clear away the misconceptions obscuring his work, and ultimately provide the artist with an art historical identity.

For convenience and clarity Trusttun's career has been divided into five chronological periods. These are not stylistic phases imposed by the artist. Each period is marked by a significant experience that has activated a shift in his artistic direction. The primary reason for a chronological approach is to provide a more orderly examination of this 'multi-faceted' artist. Such an approach will reveal how he became established during the 1960s, how he has held his position at the forefront of New Zealand art through a career of dramatic change and experimentation, and how, after thirty years of painting, he has continued to hold the attention and, in fact, surprise, critics and art historians.

Because Trusttun is such a prolific artist, it is impossible to discuss in detail even half of what he has produced throughout his career. Therefore, the intention of this thesis is to bring together a careful selection of works representative of each new step in his artistic evolution. Based on the findings revealed by a thorough examination of these works, and a study of Trusttun's influences, inspirations, techniques, materials and subject matter, the claims made by art historians and critics who have questioned the nature of the artist's style will be re-examined. Trusttun's style will then be re-assessed and re-defined, so as to provide him with an individual artistic identity within the context of New Zealand art.

1. Lee Harris, 'Taking art to people'. *The Otago Daily Times*, 27 April 1990.

Prisoner?

An artist should never be:

prisoner of himself,

prisoner of a style,

prisoner of a reputation,

prisoner of success, etc.,

Did not the Goncourts write that the artists of the
great age of Japanese art changed names many times
during their careers?

I like that: they wanted to safeguard their freedom.

Henri Matisse

'Jazz' 1947 ¹

¹ Quoted from Sophie Hawkes, 'Henri Matisse: Jazz'. *Art News*, October 1983, p 75.

INTRODUCTION

Philip Trusttum is a contemporary artist in mid-career. He has been painting seriously since 1961, and, aside from brief trips to Australia, Europe and the United States, has spent most of his artistic life in New Zealand.

While Trusttum is a major artist of his generation, knowledge of his artistic development is, surprisingly, limited and somewhat disjointed, and as a result it is difficult to determine exactly what sort of artist he is, and where he stands in relation to New Zealand painting.

Trusttum has featured in general survey texts on New Zealand art since 1968, and in several exhibition catalogues, magazine and newspaper articles. He has not been ignored by critics or art historians. However, while there appears to be no shortage of information about him, the majority of these sources are widespread and not easy to obtain. The only immediately available sources are the survey texts. These allot only a few paragraphs to each individual artist, which is simply not enough to do his work justice.

Aside from difficulties arising from the restrictions of the current literature, there are also characteristics of this artist that are not conducive to an immediate or thorough understanding. Prolific in output, producing one hundred and ten works for his first exhibition in 1965, Philip Trusttum is probably one of New Zealand's least predictable artists. Compared to many New Zealand painters, for example, Sir Mountford Tosswill Woollaston, Colin McCahon and Gordon Walters, Trusttum has a 'joyfully chaotic'¹ approach to art. Throughout his career he has avoided concentrating on one

style for any length of time, and has refused to proceed in what might appear to be a logical direction from the point where he changes his style.

Trusttum does exactly what he wants to do; he paints what he wants to paint. Constantly changing, mixing techniques and styles, the only consistent feature about Trusttum is his inconsistency. The artist also tries to avoid discussing his work, believing that it can 'speak for itself'.² With paintings scattered throughout New Zealand and overseas, it is difficult to account for everything he has done, or to keep up with his pace.

Hugo Claus defended his own abundant outpouring of work by saying:

I just can't help producing a lot. I reserve the right to produce what suits me at any given moment. And I keep what I like.³

This statement is directly applicable to the impulsive and productive Philip Trusttum. This confusing combination has resulted in contradictory views of his stylistic identity. The literature has either dubbed Trusttum an 'Expressionist', or declared him to be 'style-less'. The artist cannot possibly be both, separately these labels can be vague and misleading, combined they only contradict and confuse. Knowledge about Philip Trusttum's art is limited, not because there is little to know, but because there is too much to know. During his career he has produced more than some artists have produced in a life-time. For example, in 1982 Napier's *Daily Telegraph* stated that: 'Mr Trusttum painted more than 2,000 works between 1962 and 1979'⁴ - approximately one hundred a year.

Because it is difficult to fit him neatly into any pre-existing art historical category, or any national artistic group or movement, it is instead, easier to describe what he is not, rather than what he is.

Concerned with a conglomeration of international styles, instead of New Zealand art trends, Trusttun is not a contemporary Realist. He does not belong with the 'uncompromising' figurative painters like Don Binney, Peter Siddell, Michael Smither, Brent Wong and Robin White. Nor is he interested in the pure abstraction of Gordon Walters, Milan Mrkusich, Ralph Hotere, and Gretchen Albrecht. His subject matter is not landscape or geometry, it is from his experience and his home surroundings. It is not social or political, Trusttun is concerned with everyday objects and activities that are easy to relate to.

Knowing what Trusttun is not, it is difficult, but not impossible, to discover what he is. A 'down-to-earth' artist with no complex theories clouding his work, Trusttun's art should be accessible and uncomplicated. Instead it is obscured by current interpretations, and an absence of information.

The best way to understand such a changeable and prolific artist as Trusttun is through a thorough chronological examination of what he has achieved, from art school to the present day. It is only by observing the changes in his career and the variety of techniques, methods, materials and influences he has worked through, that the dominant trends and characteristics of his art can be discovered.

The chronological survey provides an introduction to Trusttum's art. It also enables his diversity to be dealt with without the risk of exclusion or contradiction. Using such an approach the artist's career can be broken down into smaller, better defined areas, allowing each new development to be examined individually. Basically, this approach provides the opportunity to pin-point a variety of influences and styles, while at the same time appreciating that each explanation offered is not intended to cover his entire artistic development, only steps within it.

Ultimately, a chronological examination of Philip Trusttum's work leaves a view of the artist as a whole, from the beginning of his career to the present day. Armed with the knowledge of his development the opportunity arises for the first time to re-examine and re-assess whether Trusttum is an 'Expressionist' or a 'style-less' artist; and if he is neither, to re-define who and what he is and where he stands in relation to other New Zealand painters.

ENDNOTES FOR INTRODUCTION.

1. Peter Leech, 'A game for the living'. *The Otago Daily Times*, 12 August 1982.
2. *Philip Trusttum*. (catalogue), Bosshard Galleries, Akaroa, 8 September 1973.
3. Jean-Clarence Lambert, *Karel Appel: Works on paper* (New York, 1980), p 93.
4. 'Philip Trusttum'. *The Daily Telegraph*, Napier, 14 October 1982.

CHAPTER ONE

THE FORMATIVE YEARS 1940 - 1964.

'Trusttun appears to be a painter born with an instinct for painterly mediums.' ¹

(Docking, 1971)

On 9 June 1990, Philip Trusttun celebrated his fiftieth birthday. As he is considered to be one of New Zealand's foremost contemporary artists, it is worth pausing to examine his achievements to date.

As early as 1966, only five years after Rudolf Gopas introduced him to the act of painting and modern art, critic and author Hamish Keith predicted that Trusttun was 'likely to become one of the most important painters of his generation'.²

From impressive beginnings as 'one of the most promising young painters in the country',³ how did this young artist fulfil these 'prophecies'? And, more importantly, how did he continue to inspire such comments today as: 'Philip Trusttun is one of the most highly respected painters working in New Zealand'.⁴

Philip Spencer Trusttun was born at Raetihi, in the King Country, in 1940, the eldest son of William Joseph and Katherine May Trusttun. His interest in art was kindled during his childhood. In order to distract him from 'bullying' his younger brother Katherine Trusttun encouraged young Philip to draw.

A woman came along one day and told my mother to give me a blackboard and chalk. . . That was probably when it started off, you know, and I've been drawing and painting pretty much all the way since.⁵

In Raetihi, Trusttum's father was a home missionary and lay preacher for the Methodist Church. Becoming disillusioned with this, and in poor health, however, William Trusttum and his family left Raetihi for the South Island in 1945. For the next three years Philip lived with his Grandmother at Papanui, in Christchurch and attended Waimairi School. In 1948 William Trusttum bought a three-and-a-half-hectare property at East Oxford in Mid-Canterbury where the family remained until 1954, living briefly in Hawarden, and then moving on to Rangiora at the end of 1955.

In Oxford Trusttum's interest in art was further encouraged. Under the tuition of an elderly woman painter he learnt to copy paintings, mainly English watercolours of animals and landscapes. As a young boy he recalls that the exercise 'was a damn bore, but probably in the long run beneficial really'.⁶

Although he showed 'a natural bent'⁷ for art as a child, during his teens it was to come a 'poor third'⁸ to his other passions of show-jumping and rugby. Despite the fact that he was 'regarded by his peers as being one of the better drawers in his class',⁹ he did not begin to study art seriously until he was twenty. Apart from basic third form art at both Hawarden Area School, and Rangiora High School, he was to have no other formal art training during his teenage years.

Philip Trusttum completed only one year at secondary school during 1955. High school was not to his liking. He found it 'too structured and oppressive'.¹⁰ Having no clear idea of what he wanted to do he decided to leave school and get a job. At the age of fifteen, his interest in art led him to apply for entrance into Canterbury University College School of Fine Arts. His application, however, was unsuccessful, as he was too young and under-qualified to be accepted. Not completely discouraged, however, he continued to draw and paint in his spare time.

In 1957 the Trusttum family moved again, this time to a two-hectare property in Ashley five kilometres from Rangiora.

In need of employment, Trusttum sought a job as a 'window dresser' in a large department store. As there were no vacancies he took a job serving behind the counter in the Manchester department at Hays Ltd. Christchurch. He remained there for the next five years. 'He enjoyed the work and the people he worked with'.¹¹

During the late 1950s, however, Philip Trusttum wanted a change. With the death of his father in 1958, the young man considered his future. At this stage he had three major options: to stay in his job, to pursue his interest in show-jumping, or to try a career in art. As drawing and painting gave him a sense of satisfaction and achievement he opted for a career in art.

Because Trusttum was doing well in his job, he was offered the chance to move 'further afield'.

They wanted me to do a manager's course or something . . .
I had the pleasure of telling them I was leaving that week.
I would've made a hopeless manager.¹²

The decision to leave work and follow his interest in art was facilitated by a number of factors and events. Trusttum was a competent rider, but his ambitions in this field were cut short when the horse he owned in a partnership was 'sold from under him' in 1958.

His future at Hays Ltd., had also lost its appeal. A new manager in his department had introduced an 'authoritarian and inflexible atmosphere'¹³ into what had previously been a pleasant working environment. The arrival of a new staff member who had traveled widely overseas left Trusttum further dissatisfied. Speaking of everything from 'religious paintings to pigmy blow darts . . . he opened up another world - apart from the eight - to - five one'.¹⁴

Having failed to be accepted into art school once already, by 1960 and still under-qualified, a career in art was beginning to seem impossible. However, when two men from the display department at Hays were accepted into the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts, Trusttum realised that he did not need secondary school qualifications once he was over twenty years of age, after his twentieth birthday in June 1960, he decided to re-apply. This time his application was successful.

Opting for a career as an artist in New Zealand was a risk. However, it was no longer the daunting step it had been fewer than twenty years earlier.

As recently as the 1940s New Zealand society was not sympathetic towards the progressive artist. The opportunity to exhibit was limited, financial assistance was restricted and conservative art societies tended to dominate the art scene. Mark Young observed that 'to further oneself as a painter often meant a one-way ticket out of the country or at least a fairly lengthy stay in an environment more stimulating than that found at home'.¹⁵

The event which best illustrates New Zealand's attitude to art during the late 1940s early 1950s is known as the 'Pleasure Garden Incident'. At a request from the Canterbury Society of Arts, six paintings by expatriate artist Frances Hodgkins were sent to New Zealand in 1948 by the British Council for possible purchase. The Society, however, decided not to buy any of the six works. The paintings were then put on display, with the 1948 Group show (which included Colin McCahon's *Takaka Day and Night*). The public was outraged by the Hodgkins works and a debate was opened in letters to the *Press*. Debate soon erupted into an argument for and against modern art. Despite numerous protests and appeals the Society still declined to purchase any of the paintings.

In 1949 Margaret Frankel gave a donation 'towards the purchase for Christchurch of *Pleasure Garden*'.¹⁶ Frankel's donation was supported by thirty-nine other subscribers, and the painting was offered to the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. Cecil Kelly's comments on the painting reflect the opinion of the advisory committee at the time: '... the tone is not good, the colour is not good, and the composition is all over the place. A child could do it'.¹⁷ The gift of *Pleasure Garden* was rejected.

This act was followed by more council meetings, letters and petitions. Finally, after the advisory committee was reformed the Robert McDougall Gallery reconsidered the gift and accepted *Pleasure Garden* in 1951, almost four years after its arrival in New Zealand.

The 'Pleasure Garden Incident' serves to illustrate how conservative and insular New Zealand was at the beginning of the 1950s. At a time when the New Zealand public found it difficult to comprehend Frances Hodgkins's painting, Europe had already experienced over fifty years of modernism and witnessed many diverse artistic developments from Expressionism and Cubism to Dada and Surrealism. By the 1950s Abstract Expressionism had already begun in America.

For modern art in New Zealand, though, the acceptance in Christchurch of *Pleasure Garden* was a minor triumph. It marked the beginning of the breakdown of traditional attitudes and institutions that had dominated and stifled New Zealand artists. A number of events during the 1950s paved the way for the more sympathetic environment evident in the 1960s, to the benefit of Philip Trusttum and a new generation of artists.

New Zealand's insularity was further broken down by an influx of touring modern art exhibitions. 25 *Masterpieces of Contemporary British Painting* arrived in 1951. An optimistic Auckland art critic, T. Bond, hailed it as 'more than fresh air; it is a prevailing breeze by which New Zealand art can set a course'.¹⁸ While it failed to have such an impact, five years later the New Zealand public was to be 'dragged screaming into the twentieth century'.¹⁹

The artist responsible for this was Henry Moore, with his exhibition of sculpture and drawings. Fifty thousand people visited the exhibition in Auckland and another ten thousand in other centres.²⁰ Modern art was at last a reality for the New Zealand public.

The exhibition that was to exert the most influence on New Zealand artists was the 1958 *British Abstract Painters* show. According to Gordon H. Brown, the collection consisted 'mainly of English imitations of American Abstract Expressionism', and 'Post-war School of Paris abstraction'.²¹ However, for New Zealand painters, the British show offered up-to-the-minute, first-hand contact with abstract styles.

The abstract art on display strengthened the position of artists such as Milan Mrkusich and Gordon Walters, who had already moved away from the representational, and also inspired others, such as Kase Jackson and Don Peebles, to take a similar path.

Although the touring exhibition was an important step towards bringing artists up to date with international developments, art books and magazines, with colour reproductions, were to become their 'greatest source of contact with modern movements abroad'.²² As the number of artists interested in pursuing modern art increased, so too did public and institutional support.

In 1957 the Auckland City Art Gallery initiated a series of exhibitions surveying modern art in New Zealand. Although uneven in character, grouping artists like Sydney Lough Thompson with Milan Mrkusich, *Eight New Zealand Painters* marked a major breakthrough for the progressive artist. Galleries had

finally recognised the contemporary New Zealand painter's contribution to the arts.

The 1950s also saw the rise of the Dealer Gallery. In 1958 the Argus House Gallery opened in Auckland. Argus House was interested in dealing specifically with contemporary work, this gallery was not the first to operate in this manner, but like its predecessors, The Helen Hitchings Gallery in Wellington and Christchurch's Gallery 91, Argus House soon closed. However, though unsuccessful during the 1950s, the dealer gallery was soon to become an 'essential and permanent' part of the New Zealand art establishment.

During the 1960s the dealer galleries had greatly reduced the need for the progressive artist to go 'abroad'. They offered an individual both moral and financial support, and essentially enabled the concept of the professional artist to become a reality in this country.

New Zealand's artistic development was so rapid between the 1940s and the 1960s that Mark Young commented in 1968 that, 'New Zealand has compressed nearly a century into the last thirty years'.²³ By the time Philip Trusttum had arrived at the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts, modern art and the professional modern artist were on their way to becoming established in New Zealand society.

The change in attitude towards contemporary painting also affected New Zealand's art schools. For many decades art institutions had not seen it as their

duty to turn out individual self-supporting artists. A.R.D. Fairburn wrote in 1945 that the function of this country's art schools:

is not to produce artists. It is in the main to provide instruction for people who have some natural talent, in the traditional principles of drawing and sculpture.²⁴

During the 1940s it was the Canterbury College School of Art's duty to train 'good art teachers rather than artists'.²⁵ 'We do want artists as art teachers but we do need people trained in the art of teaching'.²⁶ The school had an identity problem. It did not know whether it was an academic institute or a training college.

Founded in 1882, the 'School of Art' was sustained with endowments and Education Board payments, these being reciprocated by art instruction in schools and Training College. In 1929 the 'School of Art' moved into closer association with Canterbury College when it won university approval to award the Diploma in Fine Arts. However, the 'School of Art' did not become a university institution until 1950.²⁷

'For most of its history the school has been traditionalist and proud of it'.²⁸ Its teaching methods were those of an art school that might have been found in the provinces of Britain. In 1930 art teacher Hugh Scott described the Canterbury College School of Art as being 'the finest in the land'.²⁹ However, it was not a place approved of by everyone. Mountfort Tosswill Woollaston lasted only two terms there in 1931.

On his arrival Woollaston had been filled with optimism and enthusiasm; 'yet when I got down to the required studies and practises I didn't find them exhilarating'.

The process I was being shaped by, I found, lasted four years, at the end of which you were expected to get your Diploma of Fine Arts, or you would leave the school as a failure. In the third and fourth years of this course you ascended to the life class at the top of the building, there they drew and painted from the nude.³⁰

The Canterbury College School of Art did not suit his needs. He found it slow and conservative, and inhibiting to his creative ambitions.

In 1931 'everything was subordinated to the requirements of the diploma students'.³¹ By the 1940s the School had become confused about its role. Should it produce secondary school art teachers or artists? As a result of this confusion 'a partial apathy enveloped the diploma course'. Russell Clark, who had 'originally joined the staff with some enthusiasm slowly grew frustrated with the narrow attitudes pervading the School and increasingly sought solace in his own work'. Gordon H. Brown explains that, 'on the whole the teaching was rigidly pseudo-academic, and any hint of interest a student might express in Picasso, Klee or Kandinsky was hardly encouraged'.³²

Regardless of the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts' difficulties and uncertainty of role throughout this century, the School has produced many of New Zealand's best-known artists: from Rata Lovell-Smith and Russell Clark, William Sutton and Rita Angus, to Patrick Hanly and Quentin MacFarlane.

During the 1950s, changes occurred at the School of Fine Arts. Conservatism was breaking down. As Quentin MacFarlane recalls the 1950s marked the 'end of the antique drawing era'.³³ There was a real 'Bohemian atmosphere' and the students were convinced they would be 'full-time' artists.

While struggling to establish an identity as a university institution during the 1950s, the School had to vacate its premises to allow the over-crowded library to expand. It moved out of the city on to the new campus at Ilam and was 'temporarily' housed at Okeover, an isolated converted farmhouse. The University did not provide permanent accommodation for the School of Fine Arts until the early 1980s.

It was during these years of transition that Philip Trusttum enrolled at the School. Still living at Ashley, North Canterbury, he had to catch the train every weekday morning at 7.20am and would not arrive home until 6.30pm in the evening;³⁴ to attend art school involved a twelve-hour day for the twenty-one year old. Having decided he 'needed a change of life',³⁵ Trusttum sat the Preliminary Examination in 1961. This involved one year of study and was required when a student had not matriculated. On passing the Preliminary Examination he was admitted into the Diploma of Fine Arts course, which consisted of three years full-time study.

In the First Professional year, the student received a basic grounding in Fine Arts: drawing, painting, sculpture, design and general history of art. The purpose of this introductory year was to allow students to discover where their strengths and interests lay. It also enabled students to prepare for the second and third professional examinations where they specialised in painting,

sculpture or design. After successfully completing three years the student could be awarded the Diploma in Fine Arts or complete one more year and leave the school with a Diploma in Fine Arts with Honours.

The courses listed in the School of Fine Arts' prospectus were traditional and academic in 1962. The 'candidate' was required to attend classes in 'Geometrical Drawing and Perspective, Drawing and Painting from the Antique, and Anatomical Drawing'.³⁶ Despite its conservative appearance, according to Philip Trusttum, the School was 'probably at its most avant-garde'.³⁷

'The notion of appointing New Zealand staff with established artistic reputations was slow in gaining acceptance'.³⁸ By 1962 two of Canterbury's senior lecturers in painting, Russell Clark appointed in 1947, and William A. Sutton in 1949, were both acclaimed New Zealand artists in their own right. In 1959 the School of Fine Arts appointed another modern artist, Lithuanian-born Rudolf Gopas to the staff. Through such appointments, the school was gradually opening up to contemporary national and international developments.

The ones to benefit from this were its students. They were encouraged to be 'independent' and 'questioning'³⁹ and to develop their own styles. In contrast to the Auckland School of Art during the late 1950s P.A. Tomory observed that:

... style and technique were imposed from above to such an extent that the Auckland school could mount an annual students exhibition that looked like a one-man show.⁴⁰

Proof of Canterbury's 'freedom at that time' was the emergence during the mid-1960s of a lot of 'independent talent'.⁴¹ Barry Cleavin, Dick Frizzell, Alistair Nisbett-Smith, Rosemary Johnstone and Tom Kreisler.

The School of Fine Arts lived up to Trusttum's expectations. For him everything was new and exhilarating. The 'exciting thing was meeting the people - the teachers actually - really exciting. Especially W.A. Sutton, R. Clark, Gopas and Tom Taylor'.⁴²

During his formative years, the lecturer who exerted the strongest influence on Trusttum was 'undoubtedly' Rudolf Gopas: 'Gopas - ah yes - [he was] way out ahead of anybody else, I think'.⁴³ Trained at the Kaunas Academy of Art in Lithuania, Gopas arrived in New Zealand in 1949 and ten years later was appointed lecturer in painting at Canterbury.

This position allowed Gopas more time to paint and the freedom to voice his ideas on art and life to a generation of young artists. Aside from Philip Trusttum, Gopas was to influence a host of other students, notably, Tony Fomison, Barry Cleavin and Philip Clairmont.

His intense personality made a strong impression, favourable or otherwise on students and teachers and those whom he taught remember him vividly.⁴⁴

Gopas 'responded positively to the activity of teaching',⁴⁵ he believed in art 'strongly' and regarded it as one of his responsibilities as a lecturer in painting to continue his own work.

At the time of his appointment to Canterbury Gopas had been experimenting with a variety of styles. 'He studied and learned from the painters he admired',⁴⁶ borrowing from different movements, including Post-Impressionism, Cubism and, later, primitivism and the 'Old Masters'. In 1959 he turned again to German Expressionism which he had rediscovered through publications and reproductions after his arrival in New Zealand.

Gopas valued what he had learned from the 'Masters' and was convinced that his students should also learn the technique and craft of painting from international art. He firmly believed that: 'Art evokes a global form, not a national one'.⁴⁷ There was, however, one problem. In order for his students to benefit from international art he first had to introduce a large body of work to them. The only available source was books and his knowledge and memory of the originals.

Trusttum recalls that 'the students at this time did not know who Picasso or Paul Klee were and when Gopas introduced [their works] to them, they laughed'.⁴⁸ Gopas saw it as his duty to initiate and encourage an interest in international art, not only to the benefit of the student, but also to their country's art. 'This craze by New Zealanders to find the New Zealand painter is dangerous. All it will do is produce a closed school of painters'.⁴⁹

Gopas observed that 'students come into the school with a very haphazard background in art. New Zealand education and way of life do little to exploit a natural understanding of abstract elements'.⁵⁰ The high schools did not

encourage personal expression, nor did they give classes in art history and appreciation.

A former student of the School of Fine Arts described Gopas's approach to art education:

Gopas took a very clear theoretical position about painting. He was for spontaneity in art, for the intuitive and the experimental. He had a great loathing for the routine exercises of the art school; still-life, antique drawing and the academic life-class. He found these studies boring and useless.⁵¹

'At the beginning', Trusttum recalls, 'Gopas demanded academic drawing to set a standard. Once that standard was reached, there was no more use for it'.⁵²

His painting class was entitled 'Materials and Techniques'. Here Gopas would teach his students about the 'mechanics of art'. He would hold free discussions on why and how things worked. These sessions would sometimes last up to three hours. One of his teaching methods involved the comparison of leading artists' works.

He would say that each painting was made up of five major properties: 'colour, form, line, texture, and psychology'.⁵³ At one session he compared a work of Frances Hodgkins with Rembrandt. Looking only at the painting, not at the artist, he discussed each of the five properties and rated them on a scale of one-to-one-hundred according to their overall strength. He would look at the relationship of darks and lights, of curved and straight lines, and analyse how and why some paintings were stronger than others.

Another method of instruction was for his students to copy a painting by a modern artist from printed reproductions. Trusttum explains, 'Gopas set these lessons mainly because there was no culture here - he would say that the only art here was Maori art'.⁵⁴ Each student had to select a work of their choice, 'he wanted you to find an artist you could relate to'. The main intention behind this exercise was to equip the student for painting in the future, 'to teach yourself after art school; to look at other artists and learn from them'.⁵⁵

Gopas admired Frances Hodgkins and Colin McCahon, but he tended to promote the European tradition in art over and above any other culture's achievements. Among his heroes were Paul Cézanne, Vincent Van Gogh, Henri Matisse and Paul Gauguin. Dunn recalls that Gopas 'was always ready to discuss their paintings and methods with his students'. He 'wanted to stimulate each student and discover their potential'.⁵⁶

There were times, however, when Trusttum found the atmosphere oppressive. As a result he did a lot of painting at home, and brought it into the School to be examined. At one stage he was doing work similar in style to Toss Woollaston's. Gopas said to him that 'you might become known in New Zealand, but not overseas if you keep this up'.⁵⁷

In order to change Trusttum's direction Gopas would 'throw' him more art books for inspiration. One important source for Gopas at this time was Bernard S. Myers's *Expressionism: A generation in revolt*. It was through Gopas that Trusttum first 'saw art in general'.

He was introduced to the writings of Miró and Matisse. Miró fascinated him especially the way 'he would look at and criticise his own works'.⁵⁸ He also read Kandinsky's *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*. Concentrating on the colour essay, he began to learn how to manipulate each colour. Trusttum discovered from Kandinsky's writing that a painter should 'not water yellows, and that reds can over take a painting'.⁵⁹ He also learnt that colour can be an experience - both physical and emotional some colours are 'rough' or 'prickly', others are 'smooth and velvety'. 'Everyone knows that yellow, orange and red suggest ideas of joy and plenty' (Delacroix).⁶⁰

Trusttum had arrived at art school with virtually no artistic background. He was open-minded, and willing to learn; he was 'raw material' in Gopas's hands. Jim and Mary Barr observed that Rudolf Gopas's 'impact on his students was profound, and for many he was a formative influence in their lives and their work'.⁶¹

This is certainly true of Trusttum. Thirty years later he remembers well the lessons he was taught and they continue to affect the way he views art and life today. 'Gopas opened up the world to me'. He had an 'enquiring mind' he would 'question every thing, especially convention. He'd take the smallest thing and ask 'why?'

Why start in the middle of the page when drawing?
 Matisse could do a composition anywhere and everywhere.
 Why don't you use your left hand? Why start at the top of
 the page when writing?⁶²

One of the most valuable lessons he learnt from Gopas was how to see the world differently. To constantly question the conventional point of view. This lesson was to have an immense impact on his work after art school. Although his subject matter is generally from the real world its original appearance has been altered dramatically through Trusttun's eyes. His curious view-point and colour remove the subject from its initial source - creating an alternative view of everyday objects and events.

Trusttun's interest in international art over New Zealand art trends has also been ascribed to Gopas's stimulus. Like his teacher, he is not ashamed to admit his debt. When Trusttun loses sight of his direction he turns to the leaders of modern art for guidance; either to develop their ideas further, or to enlarge his own 'artistic vocabulary' in the hope that out of a variety of sources he will find a distinctly personal direction.

The impact of Gopas on Trusttun is evident throughout his career.

Gopas taught me something of the future never-ending
and perhaps most important taught me to teach myself.
And also for me as a country-boy showed me the world of
painting.⁶³

In what form did Gopas's influence appear in Trusttun's work? Gopas encouraged a lively experimental approach to painting, he 'emphasised creative intuition'⁶⁴ and encouraged personal expression at the expense of representational likeness.

While in New Zealand Gopas had rediscovered German Expressionism. As a result, a number of his students were to form 'expressionist rather than classical manners of painting'.⁶⁵ Gopas also introduced his students to the Cobra movement and the American Abstract Expressionists. Decades after its arrival in Europe Expressionism seemed 'daringly avante-garde' in New Zealand art circles. For a young artist during the 1960s expressionism proved to be an exciting and rebellious manner of painting.

Trusttum immersed himself naturally into this style. He progressed from the pastel drawings of racing cars prior to art school, to large explosive expressionist pieces dripping with paint and brilliant colour. In his eagerness to learn, Trusttum took Gopas's advice and began to raid the territory of a variety of artists.

He combined the European Expressionists' distortion of form and colour and their turbulent paint work, with the American Expressionists' interest in pure abstraction. Trusttum continued to move between these two styles throughout his career. At times the influence is obvious, at other stages it disappears altogether, only to reappear again in another form, at a later date.

In his First Professional year Trusttum threw himself into the activity of painting. To begin with he painted small expressionist works. One surviving series of works from 1962 are the *Ashley Paintings* (pl. 1). Inspired by the landscape surrounding his home at Ashley in North Canterbury, Trusttum began simplifying forms and tilting and flattening the picture plane. While natural forms are still recognisable they are child-like in their delineation.

As he advanced he discovered that what he was trying to achieve would be more effective on a larger scale. He would have the freedom to be more energetic and spontaneous. As he continued to loosen up his style he soon lost sight of recognisable form amidst a mass of colour and texture. In 1983 Trusttun exhibited four paintings from 1963 at the Bosshard Galleries in Dunedin. The exhibition review in the *Otago Daily Times* reveals that Trusttun's works were:

... very large, and their subject matter is sensation, sexual and emotional. Bodies, birds, half scribbled faces, numbers, words are scrawled in impasto, with large richly coloured washed areas.⁶⁶

Recognisable images weave in and out of the masses of paint. In one work the paint application can alternate between calligraphic passages and scribbled lines, darks and lights, broad regions and detailed graphic spaces. His works are not ordered or contemplative; they are instinctive. His apparent awkwardness of style and general formlessness are intentional.

Bernard S. Myers explains that:

... the Expressionists deliberately avoid the objective form of things. They attempt to cut through temporary naturalistic appearances in pursuit of the inner truth by means of intensified colour and twisted form, they reduce the reality of the objects to form and colour symbols.⁶⁷

Trusttun's style during his formative years can be attributed to his interest in the raw, energetic, spontaneous nature of Expressionism. He by-passed Canterbury's regionalist landscape tradition and moved straight into

abstraction. He was not interested in a realistic portrayal of the land. He wanted to concentrate on the act of painting itself. The subject matter was secondary to what he felt he could realise with the physical properties of paint.

The regionalists allowed the natural environment to determine the colour and style of their works. To a large extent the harsh light and stark forms of the landscape controlled the artists' portrayal.

In his art school pieces Trusttun controls his subject matter; he distorts form, intensifies colour and flattens the picture plane to achieve an emotional rather than a descriptive effect. As there is nothing to restrain his portrayal, the final result is a frenzied, formless explosion of paint.

Trusttun's early works are reminiscent of a number of artists towards whom Gopas had directed him. While he searched for a personal direction, Trusttun experimented with a variety of techniques, combining Karel Appel and Jackson Pollock's large swirling compositions, with the intense, luminous colours of Wassily Kandinsky and Willem de Kooning's calligraphic forms.

Untitled (1963) recalls the style of those painters who participated in the Cobra movement; Asger Jorn, Appel and Pierre Alechinsky. Cobra lasted officially for only three years (1948-1951), and involved a group of artists from Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam who were,

... concerned above all with spontaneity of inspiration and of expression, and with the amalgamation of painting, writing and sculpture. The artists associated with it turned to primitive art, children's art, and graffiti in their search for spontaneity and irrational 'uncivilised' forms of expression.⁶⁸

Appel, Jorn, and Alechinsky continued to work for years afterwards in Cobra-like styles. Appel was intoxicated by the process of painting, which he regarded as a 'tangible sensuous experience'. 'My paint tube is like a rocket which describes its own space'.⁶⁹

This statement could also be a fitting description of Trusttum's approach to painting during the early 1960s. The scale of his works and the vigorous technique suggests that Trusttum is very much part of his paintings. Mark Rothko argued in 1951 that:

To paint a small picture is to place yourself outside your experience, to look upon an experience as a stereopticon view or with a reducing glass. However, you paint a larger picture, you are in it. It isn't something you command.

'It was now no longer an object in an environment but an environment in itself'.⁷⁰

In *Untitled* (1963) and *No* (c.1964-65) (pl. 2), Trusttum became entangled in the physical properties of paint. With his whirlpools and slashes of colour, these works recall Appel's technique in *Women and Birds* (1958) and *Two Heads in a Landscape* (1958). And like Appel, his works convey a child-like delight in the activity of painting. Trusttum's surfaces are rich and varied and display a

multiplicity of layers and consistencies. In *No*, the paint appears to have been squirted straight from the tube and is literally 'dripping' off the canvas.

Nineteen-sixty-four saw Trusttun move from Ashley to a flat on Middleton Road in Christchurch. At the start of his Third Professional year, Trusttun felt that a style of his own was beginning to emerge. He gradually turned away from landscape as his subject matter, towards more personal images. As a result, recognisable shapes began to reappear in his work.

In *Head and Shoulders* (1964), he turned to the human form for inspiration. Although there is little sense of space and modelling is played down, out of the mass of colour and scribbled paint a figure takes shape. Trusttun's treatment of form recalls de Kooning's handling of the female figure in his '*Women*' series of 1952-53. Edward Lucie-Smith observed that de Kooning,

deals with imagery which seems to rise up out of the texture of the paint, and then to relapse again into the chaos which momentarily gave it form.⁷¹

Trusttun employs an aerial view of an anonymous figure's head and shoulders and, as a result, the areas in front and behind the image appear to be inter-changeable; three-dimensional depth is abandoned. Like de Kooning, Trusttun was successful in 'marrying figuration to an extreme gestural manner'.⁷²

After experimenting with a variety of styles Trusttun eventually settled on a more individual combination of techniques. In relation to Gopas's expressionist sources Trusttun was to emerge from the School of Fine Arts

with a style that had closer affiliations to the American Abstract Expressionist movement. Like those 'action painters' Trusttun had 'discarded the philosophical and political base of the German movement', and proceeded to develop 'the freely expressive style to its logical conclusion',⁷³ though with one significant addition, an Appel-like optimism.

Trusttun's style in 1964 was spontaneous and chaotic. But his paintings were chaotic in a playful sense. There was no place for despair or anxiety in his works.

Trusttun felt that his art school experience was an 'extremely fertile time for him learning much about the business of being a painter'.⁷⁴ Art school was his major formative influence. In this stimulating environment, he was able to discover his artistic potential. Gopas observed his student's youthful energy and wide-eyed willingness to learn and directed him towards a style that would channel and contain his vitality without stifling it.

With his obvious enthusiasm for painting, and his ease of manipulating colour and texture, Trusttun appeared to have a natural affinity for exuberant gestural styles. His works convey the wonder and excitement of a child who has just discovered paint. Within the space of four years art school did more than guide Trusttun; it transformed an interest in art into a passion.

Towards the end of his fourth year, the young artist felt that he was ready to put into practice all that Gopas had told and shown him. 'You started to feel your oats perhaps - wanting to branch out'.⁷⁵ Convinced he had obtained all

he could from art school, Trusttun did not apply for the Honours year, and graduated in 1965 with a Diploma in Fine Arts.

With no guarantee of 'employment', and eager to embark on a career as an artist, Trusttun remained optimistic. His optimism was not misplaced though, for he was entering a society that was increasingly supportive of the modern artist. With a number of art dealers, particularly in Auckland, aware of international developments and encouraging the avante-garde, by 1964 New Zealand was finally prepared for an artist like Trusttun.

ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER ONE

1. Gil Docking, *Two Hundred Years of New Zealand Painting* (Wellington, 1971 - enlarged by Michael Dunn - Auckland, 1990), p.198.
2. Hamish Keith, *Eve*, September 1966, p.14.
3. Mark Young, *New Zealand Art: Painting 1950-1967* (Wellington, 1968), p.5.
4. Graeme Stradling, 'Trusttun up with the best'. *The Nelson Evening Mail*, 8 February 1989.
5. 'Young painter placed among country's best'. *The Press*, 21 December 1965.
6. *ibid.*
7. Sue Dudman, 'Raetihi-born artist faces bright future'. *The Wanganui Chronicle*, 13 July 1984.
8. 'Painting is tightrope but artist tries to keep his balance'. *The New Zealand Herald*, 27 August 1966.
9. James Ross, Philip Trusttun: A Brief Chronology, National Art Gallery Research Collection, Wellington, c.1974, p.1.
10. Interview with Philip Trusttun, 4 September 1990.
11. John Coley, 'Powerhouse Painter'. *Time Off*, p.20.
12. See n. 5.
13. See n. 11.
14. See n. 5.
15. See n. 3, p.3.
16. Gordon H. Brown, *New Zealand Painting 1940-1960: Conformity and Dissension* (Wellington, 1981), p.36.
17. Jim and Mary Barr, *When Art Hits the Headlines: a survey of controversial art in New Zealand* (Wellington, 1987), p.18.
18. See n. 16.
19. Gordon H. Brown and Hamish Keith, *An Introduction to New Zealand Painting 1839 - 1980* (Auckland, 1982), p.175.
20. *ibid.*

21. *ibid.*, p.176.
22. See n. 16, p.23.
23. See n. 3, p.3.
24. See n. 16, p.40.
25. Libby Plumridge, 'Celebrating the art school experience'. *New Zealand Listener*, 10 July 1982, p.34.
26. 'Art in Post-Primary Schools'. *The Arts in New Zealand*. September/October vol. 17, no. 5, September/October, 1945. p.11.
27. W.J. Gardner (ed.), *A History of the University of Canterbury 1873-1973* (Christchurch, 1973), p.229.
28. See n. 25.
29. Mountford Tosswill Woollaston, *Sage Tea: An Autobiography* (Auckland, 1980), p.208.
30. *ibid.*, p.210.
31. *ibid.*, p.213.
32. See n. 16, p.39.
33. Angela D'Audney, Interview with Quentin MacFarlane, 'Canterbury School of Fine Arts', *Kaliedoscope*. Television New Zealand. June 4, 1982.
34. Philip Trusttun, reply to letter from H. J. Taylor, 17 January 1992.
35. *ibid.*, April 29, 1991.
36. University of Canterbury, School of Fine Arts, *Prospectus*, Christchurch, 1962.
37. See n. 10.
38. Alan McLeod (ed.), *The Pattern of New Zealand Culture* P. A. Tomory, 'Art', (New York, 1968), p.198.
39. See n. 10.
40. See n. 38.
41. See n. 10.
42. Angela D'Audney, Interview with Philip Trusttun, 'Canterbury School of Fine Arts', *Kaliedoscope*. Television New Zealand. June 4, 1982.
43. *ibid.*

44. Katherine J. Furniss, *Rudolf Gopas (1913-1983)* Masters Thesis, Art History, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 1987, p.21.
45. Jim and Mary Barr, *Rudolf Gopas* (New Plymouth, 1982), p.24.
46. See n. 44, p.61.
47. *ibid.*, p.70.
48. See n. 10.
49. See n. 44, p.70.
50. *ibid.*, p.69.
51. Michael Dunn, 'Rudolf Gopas: A Teacher and Painter in Retrospect'. *Art New Zealand*, vol. 27, 1983, p.28.
52. See n. 10.
53. *ibid.*
54. *ibid.*
55. *ibid.*
56. See n. 51.
57. See n. 10.
58. *ibid.*
59. *ibid.*
60. Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art and Painting in Particular 1912* (New York, 1947), p.46.
61. See n. 45.
62. See n. 10.
63. See n. 9, p.3.
64. See n. 44, p.1.
65. *ibid.*, p.21.
66. Bridie Lonie, 'Trusttun: early works'. *The Otago Daily Times*, 31 October 1983.
67. Bernard S. Myers, *Expressionism: a generation in revolt* (London, 1963), p.41.
68. Jean-Clarence Lambert, *Cobra* (London, 1983), dust-jacket.
69. Anthony Everitt, *Abstract Expressionism* (London, 1975), p.55.

- 70. *ibid.*, p.25.
- 71. Edward Lucie-Smith, *Movements in Art Since 1945* (London, 1984), p.48.
- 72. See n. 69, p.25.
- 73. Derek Schulz, 'The Paintings of Philip Trusttum'. *Art New Zealand* vol. 20, 1981. p.28.
- 74. See n. 9, p.2.
- 75. See n. 42.

CHAPTER TWO

BECOMING ESTABLISHED 1964 - 1972

'A painting should sing, vibrate, seduce and love; should sing out life, should have everything'.¹

(Philip Trusttun, 1966)

Philip Trusttun's experience at the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts revealed to him his artistic potential and uncovered a natural enthusiasm for painting. While these discoveries promised to be beneficial in the long run, on a more personal level his art school experience almost 'proved a fatal one'.² Four years at the school turned out to be a very costly exercise for Trusttun. Throughout this time he had to interrupt his studies in order to work to pay for art supplies and basic living expenses. Despite part-time employment, he emerged from the school £800 in debt.

While at the School of Fine Arts Trusttun met Lee Cresswell, the daughter of Fanny Buss, a well-known clothing designer of Christchurch. In 1965 the young couple were married, and lived in Auckland for three months.

A keen supporter of progressive young artists, Fanny Buss offered her daughter and son-in-law a house at low rental at 7a Conference Street in Christchurch. Grateful for any form of financial assistance, they accepted and in 1965, returned to Christchurch where Trusttun secured a job as a postman.

Determined to pursue a career in art, he did not abandon his painting. It was not only this determination that inspired him to persevere, for, as well as the support of close family, he was also encouraged by New Zealand's favourable artistic climate.

Trusttun had seen signs of New Zealand's artistic growth during his final year at art school, when he was asked to participate in a number of exhibitions. In 1964 he was invited to exhibit with the Group, a loose association of artists founded in 1927, initially to contest the conservatism of the art institutions. The Group exhibited together on an annual basis in Christchurch until 1977, when it disbanded,

The annual Group shows were still well regarded during the early 1960s.

According to Julie Catchpole, to exhibit with them was considered an honour, largely because

... it had always been harder to become a member of the Group than to become a working member of an art society. An artist had to be invited to join the former, whereas he or she could submit work and apply to join the latter.³

Trusttun had submitted two paintings to the Canterbury Society of Arts in his First Professional Year at art school in 1962. The works were entitled *Composition* and *Sorcerer's Apprentice*. They were noticed by a reviewer for the Christchurch *Press*: 'one newcomer, P.S. Trusttun, shows unusual understanding of colour'.⁴ Becoming a member of the C.S.A in 1963, he exhibited four paintings at its Autumn Show.

The Group also held their exhibitions at the C.S.A gallery, and no doubt discovered the young artist from the Society's shows. As a result of this early exposure, during his final year at art school, Trusttun was an honorary guest at the Group's 1964 Annual Show. At twenty-four years of age, he was exhibiting alongside some of the best-known names in New Zealand art: Rata Lovell-Smith, Colin McCahon, Toss Woollaston, and Rita Angus. Through this exhibition, Trusttun again caught the attention of the Christchurch *Press*. The reviewer John Simpson commented that:

The next wall is dominated, in fact the whole gallery is dominated, by two enormous works by Philip Trusttun. These are special wide-screen productions in colour. One of these works is entitled 'All there Is'. I can't imagine a more appropriate one. But here is a young painter so full of life it is spilling over into his pictures. The total effect is like going from a dark interior into a garden in bright sunshine blazing with all the colours of the seedsman's palette.⁵

This critical acceptance of a progressive student painter reveals the extent to which attitudes towards contemporary art had changed since the early 1950s.

In 1964 Trusttun was invited to participate in one of the Auckland City Art Gallery's *Contemporary New Zealand Painting* exhibitions. In 1961 these touring anthologies had replaced the series of eight-person shows initiated by P.A. Tomory in 1957. As summarised by Hamish Keith:

The exhibitions had two major purposes: to contribute something towards lessening the isolation of one centre from another, and to attempt a definition of current directions and standards.⁶

As stated in the catalogue, the thirty-one artists in the 1964 show were selected to 'give some impression of the vitality of contemporary painting in New Zealand'.⁷ The selection included works by established and new artists, among them McCahon, Woollaston, Peebles, Mrkusich, Doris Lusk, Pat Hanly, Ross Ritchie and Gretchen Albrecht.

The *Christchurch Star* critic was not impressed. In a review headlined 'Contemporary N.Z. Show is Depressing', John Oakley complained that the art on display at the Durham Street Gallery was of a 'low standard'

The few good paintings in this exhibition cannot save the situation. . . , the general effect of this exhibition is depressing. There is little to 'excite' but quite a lot to 'disturb'.⁸

McCahon, Lusk, and Albrecht were among the painters who pleased him, while the work of Ritchie, Jeff Macklin and Susan Watson he found 'disturbing'. Along with twenty-one other artists Trusttun was not mentioned in the article.

While John Oakley may have been disappointed, the organisers had achieved their objective of bringing a wide representation of contemporary New Zealand art to the major centres for the first time. Philip Trusttun also benefitted from this 1964 show. The national publicity it offered led to his selection in the Commonwealth art exhibition held in London.

Contemporary Painting in New Zealand 1965 was to be the first officially sponsored collection of modern New Zealand art to be shown in London. Trusttun was to exhibit again alongside Angus, Woollaston, McCahon and

Sutton, but this time in an international context. A major achievement for the student painter, Trusttun recalls being very casual about the whole affair, 'at the time I didn't think a great deal about it, I just dumped my paintings off to be examined'.⁹ Three large gestural works were selected for the London show: *My Own* (oil), *Garden*, *Garden of Country* (oil), and *So be it* (P.V.A.). These paintings were displayed in 1965 at the Commonwealth Institute in London.

With this involvement a national exhibition, and the potential to exhibit overseas during his final year at art school, it is no wonder the young painter was optimistic about a future as a professional artist, and content to 'drift along'¹⁰ until it became a reality. As it transpired, Trusttun did not have to 'drift' for long.

The 1960s provided an increased number of exhibition venues for modern art, even the public galleries were 'adopting more adventurous attitudes towards buying works by contemporary New Zealand artists'.¹¹ By far the most beneficial development for the country's artists at that time however was the permanent establishment of dealer galleries in Auckland. Hamish Keith pointed out that in 1965:

Auckland offered more than thirty one-man exhibitions by contemporary painters. . . compared with the 1958 figure of seven one-man shows in the whole of Auckland.¹²

Because the dealer gallery made available to the artist 'extensive facilities' for 'one-man' shows, and a 'professional atmosphere'¹³ for the presentation of works, these galleries soon created a buying public.

With a growing market for contemporary art during the 1960s it soon became possible for a considerable number of young artists to make a living from painting for the first time. Philip Trusttun was to be one of these painters. As a result of his participation in Auckland exhibitions, his paintings soon attracted the attention of Kees and Tina Hos of the New Vision Gallery, Auckland. Impressed by his work they offered the young artist the opportunity to hold his first solo exhibition in 1965.

Kees and Tina Hos were to become keen and supportive promoters of Philip Trusttun's art. He was to exhibit at the New Vision Gallery for over twenty years, until Bronwen Marwick of the Loft Gallery, Motueka, became his dealer in 1987. According to James Ross, the works the young painter showed in his earlier exhibitions at the New Vision 'were unlike anything else being produced in New Zealand at the time. They were large, uncompromisingly expressionist and very numerous'.¹⁴ In a small catalogue accompanying his first exhibition Trusttun was described as 'a pure descendant of the most painterly tradition'.¹⁵

Essentially his manner of working during 1965 was a continuation of his 1964 style. The move towards more personal subject matter continued. With the birth of his son Martin in 1965, Trusttun became increasingly preoccupied with the themes of 'love, womanhood, and with birth itself.

I'm mainly concerned with life just as it's happening here. I feel caught up with it. I want to portray what I feel and what's underlying the feeling. Generally I paint things before they happen, things I know roughly are going to happen: you sort of have a feeling.¹⁶

Three paintings that are representative of his technique and handling of subject matter during 1965 are *Woman* (pl. 3), *Waiting*, and *Birth*. With no stylistic break between 1964 and 1965, recognisable images continue to be hidden amongst paint and colour. In *Woman* there are only brief suggestions of the female figure, painterly silhouettes of an image, contrasts of dark and light, line and plane reveal form and then proceed to engulf it again.

Although there are a number of concrete shapes in *Waiting*, Trusttum's images can no longer be identified. The struggle to be recognised continues in *Birth*, where faces and hands are entangled amidst a mass of ambiguous forms. Is that a screaming baby in the upper left hand corner of the painting, or a portrayal of a woman giving birth?

Painting with oils on hardboard, Trusttum uses a 'wet into wet' technique. Within the shallow pictorial space both forms and colours tend to merge into one another. Reds, blues and yellow dominate the paintings, but as they move across the surface they mix to form greens, oranges and browns.

During 1964 and 1965 Trusttum painted flat on the floor and moved around the 'canvas' like the American Abstract Expressionists. This 'all over activity' explains the strange 'spatial systems' that exist in his works. With a limited sense of depth, aerial perspectives and figures floating in undefined space, his compositions have a tendency to confuse the spectator. Out of a chaos of paint and ambiguous form, however, emanates a mood of excitement.

The artist's handling of paint and symbolic use of colour relate to the experiences he has portrayed. The viewer encounters feelings of tension and anticipation in *Waiting*, for here Trusttun has juxtaposed dark controlled quiet colour planes with bright energetic areas. The surface of *Birth*, however, is an explosion of warm colour and texture, and through this vitality Trusttun has captured the joyous vitality of the event.

Between 1965 and 1966 his manner of painting changed. Having taken the exuberant gestural method as far as he could, he started searching for more discipline and control. In 1966 a reviewer for the *New Zealand Herald* described Trusttun's first one-man show as 'a dazzler - an absolute farrago of colour and pigment'.¹⁷ While he was preparing for his second exhibition at the New Vision Gallery Trusttun confessed:

I let myself go then. For me painting is a tightrope and last year I jumped right off it. Now I'm trying to keep on it. I might teeter a bit, but I shall try to keep my balance.¹⁸

In order to keep his balance the young artist changed direction and discovered what the New Vision catalogue described as 'his own way of expression; an exuberant interplay of colour masses and script rhythms'.¹⁹

This 'personal expression', however, was inspired by a growing interest in the work of Paul Klee. Through following Klee's delicate and focussed style in art books, Trusttun learnt how to restore a sense of order and definition to his own 'canvas'. He did this by placing a greater emphasis on drawing and design.

During 1966 Trusttun's style became more linear. While he retained the rich colours and vitality of his earlier works he developed a lighter touch in his treatment of form. Although his images are more defined than before, they are still essentially abstractions. In a review of the artist's second exhibition, Mark Young observed that:

Thickly applied surfaces have been replaced by more spread-out areas of paint. His forms are now distinguished by demarcation rather than topography and there are what could almost be called uninhabited areas in some of the paintings.²⁰

In *The White Dress* (1966), for example, his manner of painting differs considerably from his 1965 style. His surfaces are flatter and the emphasis is on pattern and design. Paint is no longer 'dripping' from the surface, it is firmly attached. He does, however, retain an interest in different textures, contrasting broad areas of colour with detailed linear passages. He also experiments with different consistencies of paint. For example, winding their way through the white impasto are incised patterns reminiscent of brocade dress material.

The Auckland City Art Gallery was evidently impressed by Trusttun's change of direction for in 1966 it purchased *The White Dress* from the New Vision Gallery. According to the exhibition catalogue of his second show, the price was set at 80 guineas - approximately one-hundred and sixty-eight dollars, a high price for a young artist in 1966, but more importantly he now had one of his paintings in a major public collection.

Another significant work from this period is *Martin's Playtime* (1966) (pl. 4). Its composition is more energetic than *The White Dress*, over calm planes of colour he has woven a spider web of lively graphic forms. His colours are clear and delicate, with crisp oil washes of blue and purple, red and green dominating.

Although he has acquired more precision in the handling of paint his images are still ambiguous. The forms in *Martin's Playtime* appear to be dream fragments of the activity of play. Rather than a representation of a child playing, through Trusttun's disjointed, jumbled, abstract portrayal, he has captured the experience.

In 1966 the artist's subject matter continued to revolve around his personal world. An article in Auckland's *Weekly News* that year reveals that he was exhibiting works entitled: *Playtime with Blocks*, *Martin 5 Months*, and *Martin on Someone's Hands*. Trusttun was not interested in social or political events or in conveying deep underlying messages. He was primarily concerned with recording the day-to-day experiences of family life.

Filled with an enthusiasm for art and life he believed that a painting should convey his feelings to the spectator. With familiar subject matter, bright colour and playful line, the overall sensation experienced when work from this period is encountered is optimism and enjoyment.

As well as an increase in exhibition opportunities for the contemporary artist, the 1960s also brought with them a considerable rise in financial support. The greatest amount of assistance was to come from the Queen Elizabeth II Arts

Council. 'In 1964, the first year of its existence, the Council allocated some \$1400 (£700 approximately) of its income' to the visual arts. The amount was to increase steadily to ' \$62,000 in 1974/75 '21

While a large percentage of these grants and awards went to galleries to help them with touring exhibitions and the purchase of works, the Arts Council also awarded financial assistance to the individual artist. Providing up to '\$22,000 in both 1970-71 and 1971-2 '22 The importance of a fellowship grant for young artists was that it allowed them to devote their time to art, to experimentation and discovery.

In 1966 Philip Trusttum was given this opportunity when he was awarded the Q.E.II fellowship for travel to Australia. As he still considered himself a beginner - regarding all his paintings up to this time as 'stepping stones'²³ only - he was eager for this new experience to see and learn more about art.

Trusttum had planned to exhibit his best works of 1965 and 1966 in Sydney. Tragically, however, his hopes were destroyed, along with his paintings, in a fire which gutted the buildings owned by Guthrey's Freightways Ltd., just before his departure for Australia. Although 'the effects of the fire at the time were devastating'²⁴ for the young painter, he left for Sydney, with his family, at the beginning of 1967.

Suitable accommodation was hard to find in Sydney and compared to New Zealand it was expensive and far from satisfactory. The young family had to settle for a small two-roomed terraced house in Paddington, where Trusttum

resumed painting in a desperate attempt to make up for his loss. Four months later he had completed thirty works:

'I have kept only 7 or 8 of them' he said, 'I found it took a while to settle down in my new environment but I think things are just coming right'.²⁵

The difficulty in adjusting to this new environment had been due to the fact that he was confronted by a different life-style.

A city that contained two and a half million people, the total population of New Zealand, with a consequently proportionate increase in distractions.²⁶

The young artist felt like a 'country boy come to town',²⁷ for the very first time. The more distractions there were, the more discipline he required to continue painting. In July and August of that year a major exhibition of American art, *Two Decades of American Painting*, came to Sydney. Among the artists represented were Ellsworth Kelly, Mark Rothko, Ad Reinhardt, Robert Motherwell, Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg. Trusttun recalled that it was an 'excellent show - one of the best I have seen'.²⁸

While he found his new life-style difficult to adjust to, he soon discovered that it was not easy to break into the Sydney art scene. In order to do so, he realised that he too would have to compete in order to gain attention.

There seems to be more interest in art here, there is a greater diversity of painting. Art is very sophisticated here and the galleries appear much more business like. Trying to get them to accept your paintings is like being a traveller selling his wares.²⁹

Trusttun found it difficult to become accepted largely because he was an outsider whose style was running against the current trend. What was considered 'avante-garde' in New Zealand was no longer fashionable in Sydney art circles. Ironically, in 1966, the twenty-five year dominance of expressionist painting, both in its figurative and abstract forms, together with the symbolic modes associated with it had gradually come to an end.

Figurative expressionism had lost its impact during the 1940s. Although Sidney Nolan, Albert Tucker and Arthur Boyd continued in this style, it was soon overtaken by a development towards a loose and freer form of painting in the 1950s. This new style was akin to that of the American Abstract Expressionists and European Cobra artists. Painters sought to discover form and image in the actual process of painting. The Australian expressionists emphasised texture and material and also experimented with collage and assemblages.

Before Trusttun's arrival, expressionism had already reached its culmination in Australia, and was in decline by the early 1960s, when it was challenged successfully by a new non-figurative style, known under a variety of names as either 'colour field painting', 'hard-edged', or 'post-painterly abstraction'.

'Colour-field' painting did not become a force in Australian art until 1966, when the Central Street Gallery was established in Sydney by Tony McGillick, Harald Noritis and John White, three artists who were committed to a new mode of expression. In Sydney 'colour-field' painting became the 'avante-garde' style and was embraced and championed by the student generation born

around 1940. The years between 1965 and 1970 were the years in which the style was established.³⁰

To further complicate matters for Trusttun, each gallery in Sydney specialised in a different trend of painting. These galleries became known for the styles that they showed, rather than the standard. An example of this was that 'post-painterly abstraction' become known in Sydney as the 'Central Street style'.

Although he had initially been hoping for a solo exhibition, after four months in Sydney, Trusttun made a major break-through when Gallery A accepted one of his paintings for a showing in a group exhibition. Gallery A, first established in Melbourne and then Sydney, was an exception to the rule. It was notable for consistently supporting abstract art in a variety of modes, instead of in the latest trend only. Trusttun was favourably received by the gallery's owner, Max Hutchinson, who observed that:

He is quite promising. He has a long way to go, but he is young, and coming to Sydney will do him the world of good. He will learn a lot here.³¹

Trusttun also believed he would benefit from the experience: 'It's very stimulating here and a lot of hard work, but in the long run I'm sure it will prove beneficial'.³²

Although in hindsight he did consider the trip to be a good experience, the unfortunate start and the pressures of Sydney life were not conducive to a prolific and satisfactory output. Of his time there he says that it was a 'bad year

for painting, except for half-a-dozen works'. He painted 'too much without thought'.³³ As a result he destroyed about 90% of his work from Australia.

Nine months after his departure Trusttum returned to New Zealand. While Sydney had offered him the chance to observe a variety of work readily, and learn first-hand from art and artists more advanced than himself, this experience was to have surprisingly little impact on his work: 'Australia did not really open any more possibilities - just helped me to see things as they were, perhaps; but more clearly'.³⁴

Although his style from 1967 on tended to be quieter and more defined, these developments had their roots in his work prior to Australia. While his interest in Klee continued, for further inspiration Trusttum turned not to Sydney's latest trend of post-painterly abstraction, but back to another early twentieth-century master Joan Miró.

When *Martin's Playtime* (1966) (pl. 4) is compared to the 1967 work *Chesspieces* it is revealed how little the Australian experience affected his style. In *Chesspieces*, Trusttum's interest in drawing is continued; he has not abandoned form for pure abstraction. In fact his representation is more detailed and defined than ever before.

The two-dimensional surface is covered with a complicated network of lines, dots and dashes. While his shapes are more precise than they were in *Martin's Playtime*, their identity is still mysterious. Like Miró's images, they appear to have emerged straight from a dream. The composition consists of an accumulation of biomorphic forms within a shallow space. The chess-pieces

have come to life and taken on a soft fleshy appearance, with 'eye-stalks' and sea-weed like shapes intertwining with other surreal images.

These spontaneous dream-like visions have, however, been recorded in a technically sophisticated manner. Miró once described his own working method as a two-stage process of spontaneity and control.

I begin painting, and as I paint the picture begins to assert itself, or suggest itself under my brush. The form becomes a sign for a woman or a bird as I work. . . The first stage is free, unconscious.

But, he added, 'the second stage is carefully calculated'.³⁵

Like Miró's paintings, Trusttum's surreal visions also appear to have been constructed in this manner. While the image seems to have emerged from the unconscious, there also exists a sense of underlying order. It is with colour that Trusttum can control his spontaneous visions. Subtle tonal variations give his images body and soft subdued colour unifies and tightens his compositions.

During 1967 Trusttum was developing a manner of painting that was disciplined and sophisticated. Although his forms are twisted and distorted, his compositions appear more thought out and organised, than they were in the past. These new developments, his definition and control, can be attributed largely to the impact of Klee and Miró, rather than to Australia's 'Central Street Style'.

Nineteen-sixty-seven also saw Trusttun developing a number of pictorial devices that were to reappear in his works during the late 1970s. In *Blackboard*, for example, he has employed a flat aerial perspective. Within the work, confined by self-imposed borders, is an active interior space that is dominated by a maze of calligraphic images. This work also reveals that Trusttun was not afraid to use a variety of media, for along with oil paint he has used both pencil and ballpoint pen.

Ross Marwick has observed that in 1966 the artist had already started to experiment with different techniques and combinations:

1. Turpentine oil washes in a white ground
2. Working off a prepared coloured ground
3. Scraping into a prepared ground
4. Laying newspaper on top of a wet ground and removing it to obtain texture.³⁶

For the next five years Trusttun was to explore these techniques even further. Compared to Sydney, New Zealand offered him a supportive environment in which to continue this exploration of what he could achieve with oils. The 1960s was a period of experimentation and discovery for artists in general. The New Zealand art establishment readily accepted a variety of styles; there was no dominant trend to hinder an artist's individuality. Trusttun was one artist who was willing to take full advantage of the stylistic freedom that the sympathetic environment of the 1960s offered.

Over the 1968-1969 period his style became even more defined and precise. It was as if his Australian experience had finally surfaced to influence his approach. Although broad colour planes dominate, there always appears to be something invading the sparse surface, ranging from threads of colour and calligraphic images, to geometric patterns like those found in *Yellow Painting* (1968).

Trusttun has stripped his composition of ambiguous 'living' forms in favour of a single carefully modulated colour background. Overlaying this yellow surface is a transparent skin of blue oil wash and minute clusters of circles, lines and dots.

His 1968-1969 works are, however, not always as calculated as *Yellow Painting* (1968). During this period, he was to alternate between the simplified and the complex. In April 1969 he held his third one-man show at the New Vision Gallery: there he exhibited *The Battle Plan for Genghis Khan* (1968-1969) (pl. 5) and *The Persian Garden* (1969).

The title of *The Battle Plan for Genghis Khan* suggests that he has depicted either a map or an aerial view of a battle field. In a review of Trusttun's third exhibition, T. J. McNamara observed that: 'This picture inescapably suggests a carpet littered with the debris of life and worn in the middle by long use'.³⁷

The confusion that arises over what this work may represent is a reaction common to a number of his paintings between 1969 and 1971. The titles only vaguely provide a clue. Because his work from this time is often intricate and involved, a Trusttun 'canvas' is, instead, a mystery for the viewer, an endless

journey of discovery. In the words of Paul Klee, the spectator must let his eye 'take a walk'³⁸ around the painting.

While the composition of *The Battle Plan* does resemble that of a large mottled carpet, stylistically his inspiration developed from an interest in Persian manuscript painting. The work consists of a bright shallow rectangular space, that is enclosed by a brown textured border. The interior is filled with meticulous energetic designs in succulent colours, on an illuminated background. The border, the shallow space, the rich colours and attention to detail, are all devices used by Persian miniaturists.

In a discussion of the Persian style, Vera Kubicková revealed that the:

. . . miniaturist rejects the slightest attempt to create the illusion of space. . . He persists in his fascinating primitivism, unhampered by any obligation of realistic presentation of natural forms or their mutual relations and subordinating everything to his purely formal compositional principles and his knowledge of reality, which is something very different from visual perception.³⁹

Trusttum, of course, rejects natural representation of form altogether. His images are spontaneous and abstract, they have a life of their own: rich liquid strands and clusters of paint find their way, unaided, across the flat surface of *The Battle Plan*.

When he does paint 'reality', however, like the Persian artists, Trusttum records how he remembers it, not how he sees it before him. *The Persian Garden* continues Trusttum's fascination with Eastern topics and styles, and his 1968-1969 predilection for painterly, complex mysterious works. For

example, the composition of *The Persian Garden* consists of a veil of delicate, colourful calligraphy overlaying a combination of sparse oil washes and denser regions of paint.

The Persian Garden and *The Battle Plan for Genghis Khan* are largely abstract explorations of what can be achieved with the medium of oil paint. Despite his change in direction and experimentation, with his third one-man show, Trusttun had again impressed the critics. T. J. McNamara enthusiastically declared that:

These paintings amount to an extraordinary rich visual experience born of an inventiveness and spectacular technique that make Philip Trusttun the outstanding young painter in New Zealand - but perhaps a painter's painter, rather than a popular painter.⁴⁰

Within the same year as these 'rich visual experiences', however, Trusttun produced one of his most simplified works of the 'sixties - *The Green Fireplace No.4* (1969) (pl.6). This painting, and a number of works that followed, offers an explanation for why he was not a 'popular' painter. To begin with, there is no recognisable form, his surface detail has been reduced to the absolute minimum. With an open rectangular thread of colour on translucent green background, Trusttun suggests the surrounding entrance of a fireplace, but nothing else. Furthermore, without the title to link the work to 'reality', his subject matter would be a complete mystery and the interested spectator would therefore find themselves utterly lost.

Stylistically, *The Green Fireplace* and *Yellow Painting* (1968), were the closest Trusttun came to pure abstraction during the 1960s. However, his was not a

hard-edged geometric abstraction; the gestural painterly qualities characteristic of his work continued, although somewhat subdued. For example, the shallow green background of *The Green Fireplace* was not one flat pure colour, but a delicate blend of greens, from rusty shades through to greys. The frail line of paint is also not confined to one hue. Nor is this line precisely defined; its edges bleed a kaleidoscope of colour, from blue and green, to red, orange and yellow.

Trusttum retained elements of this delicate lyrical style throughout 1969 and 1970. for instance, in his painting entitled *Through the Eye of a Needle* (1969) he employs a similar technique, only magnified. The strands of the paint now dominate and melt into a luminous background of blues and purples. This treatment of oils appears again in 1970, with the *Baroque Chair*. Fragile fibres of blue, red and yellow paint wind in a lively irregular pattern across a muted green ground. Once again he has used the absolute minimum of imagery to suggest form.

During this 1969 to 1971 period Trusttum continued to be inspired by life around him, either by immediate objects in his environment, or by visions from books. This inspiration, however, is largely evident in his titles alone, many of his paintings contain no immediately recognisable form - only patterns, textures and gestural abstract designs. Through Rudolf Gopas Trusttum had learnt to consider anything as subject matter, but not to view it in the conventional manner. By 1969, with a thorough knowledge of his subject matter, and control of his media, he was able to record new ways of seeing the ordinary object, by capturing those properties that generally go unnoticed. Through Trusttum's eyes a dense fireplace and chair are reduced to

whispy outlines, while sewing needles are transformed into gigantic sparkling steel jewels, and curtains into living, breathing forms. The artist has given visual expression to light and space, shape, mass and texture.

At times, however, subject matter is subordinated altogether, allowing him to explore these physical qualities even further and to test the boundaries of his media. Often the works associated with this development have either remained untitled, or have names that are so elusive it is difficult to connect the image depicted to real life.

Trustum's experimentation pushed him in two different directions and towards an alternative medium of acrylic paint. In a number of paintings, for example, *A Royal Hanging* (1969), *No. 6. Miró's* (1970), *Untitled Painting* (1970), and *Curtain* (1971) (pl. 8), he concentrated on mass, depth and texture, and continued to use oil paint, as it proved to be the most successful medium when dealing with the more tangible qualities of an image.

In works like *Flower* (1970) (pl. 7) and *Decoration* (1970) he became preoccupied with shape, line and space, and found that acrylic paint allowed him to achieve the lighter, more defined touch that he required. However, seeing no need to continue with the one style, within the same year he would alternate between these two different approaches. For example, when *Untitled Painting* (1970), is compared with *Flower* (1970), these differences become immediately apparent.

The composition of *Untitled Painting* (1970) consists of an aerial view of a dense grid-like region that has been interrupted by objects randomly discarded

across the two-dimensional plane. These images exist at a number of different levels - projecting from or appearing to recede into the hard-board surface. In order to accentuate depth, he treats each level differently. Plain, smooth regions are combined with crumbled broken areas of paint. His technique is lively, to the point of being brutal. In some passages he has scratched deep into the oil paint and exposed the raw board beneath.

Untitled Painting (1970) has a varied, rich, textured receding composition, whereas *Flower* is the opposite. His inspiration for *Flower* derives from his 1968-1969 interest in Persian art. With this work he uses transparent acrylic washes of deep blues, and greens, and crisp yellows. Each form is defined by pale clear outlines. *Flower* is a flat, open, peaceful yet delicate work.

During this period Trusttun exhibited a variety of opposing styles within the same show. In 1971, at a New Vision Gallery exhibition he showed fifteen works among them were: *Curtain* (1970-71), *No. 6. Miró's Bed* (1970), *Flower* (1970), *Yellow Painting* (1971) and *Decoration* (1970). For this collection of paintings he was again praised by T. J. McNamara, who not only found the show to be one of 'incredible complexity and charm', but also declared openly that 'in nearly 500 reviews this is probably the finest display of pure painting that I have had to write about'.⁴¹

The period 1967 to 1969 was a quiet time for Trusttun. However, from 1970 onwards he was once again in the public eye. In addition to solo exhibitions, one in Auckland and the other in Wellington, he also participated in a number of important group exhibitions, both at home and abroad during 1970.

Trusttun exhibited works in the New Zealand pavilion at Tokyo's *Expo '70* and in the Auckland City Art Gallery's *New Zealand art of the 'Sixties: A Royal Visit Exhibition*. He entered the Benson and Hedges Art Award, and was included in the *Kim Wright Collection* at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery in New Plymouth. He also took part in 'The Group's' annual show at the C.S.A. in Christchurch.

During such an active period it is not surprising to find that 1970 was the year in which Trusttun first became a professional artist. He was finally able to abandon his day job as a postman and devote all his time to art.

Trusttun's seemingly effortless rise and early success can be attributed to a number of factors. Aside from his sheer determination to succeed, the 1960s had witnessed a growing awareness and interest in contemporary New Zealand art. The dealer gallery, the public gallery and the private collector provided progressive artists with a growing market, publicity and increased financial support. Trusttun's public exposure prior to leaving art school assured almost immediate recognition and acceptance in 1965.

Gil Docking observed that during the 'sixties in general:

A young painter has the chance of making an early impact in New Zealand; but in countries where young artists are numbered in their thousands, the way to early recognition is more difficult and painfully slow.⁴²

Having experienced how difficult it could be to capture the attention of the galleries while in Australia, Trusttun had been eager to return to New

Zealand where his reception might prove more favourable, and where he would not have to fight so fiercely for recognition. By 1970 at thirty years of age, he had exhibited in five solo exhibitions, and had already sold three of his works to the Auckland City Art Gallery: *The White Dress* (1966), *Yellow Painting* (1968), and *The King's Throne* (1968).

Critical interest in his paintings and public exposure had gradually increased the prices of his works; *Martin 5 Months* and *The White Dress* were listed in 1966 at 60 guineas and 80 guineas respectively, whereas *The Green Fireplace* was to sell for \$250 and *No. 6. Miró's Bed* for \$600 in 1971. In total, after leaving the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts, it took Trusttun six years to become recognised and established in New Zealand.

During these years of establishment Trusttun had continued to learn and grow as an artist. According to Docking, early success could often result in over-confidence or idleness. However, rather than 'falling into the practise of imitating oneself in order to maintain favour with one's followers',⁴³ early recognition had given Trusttun an incentive to continue painting, and the support it offered provided him with the freedom to experiment further.

With a natural enthusiasm for art, Trusttun largely painted just to please himself. An annoyed T. J. McNamara observed that:

Because he is painting for his own personal satisfaction he does indulge in some unnecessary private jokes - the pencilling on 'Homage to a Martyr' and the screws in 'Pale Blue Square'.⁴⁴

Above all, however, Trusttum wanted his paintings to be enjoyable for both himself and for his spectators. Because of this he was not afraid to try something new and exciting, to experiment with the quirky, to change direction, or to alternate between styles.

Critical praise, combined with Trusttum's fierce independence, did not result in the artist becoming over-confident about his work. On the contrary, when Peter Cape interviewed him more than a decade after leaving art school he said 'with no mock modesty' that: 'I think I may have done one or two good paintings so far'.⁴⁵

As a professional artist, Trusttum proceeded to work with the same attitudes, and in the same manner, as he had prior to 1970; alternating between styles and exploring all the possibilities of oils as a medium. By the end of 1971, however, the artist felt that he was ready for a change. Having concentrated on the same technique for over three years, and believing he had evolved as far as he could with this line of development, Trusttum had begun to lose sight of his direction.

His technique had become too meticulous and complex, while his drawings remained spontaneous and alive, his refined controlled method was gradually draining his paintings of their initial vitality. Although unsure about how to proceed, he was convinced what he needed was more freedom. Anxious to avoid becoming repetitive, and eager to inject some life and energy back into his work, Trusttum began searching for possible answers.

With a career in art assured, for the first time since he had decided to become an artist, Trusttum realistically had both the freedom and the hours to devote to his painting. Willing to make the most of this opportunity, in 1972 he severed ties with his current line of development and made ready to embark upon what was to become a lengthy period of intense experimentation and discovery.

ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER TWO.

1. "A Painting Should Sing Out Life', Says Young Artist'. *Weekly News*, 5 October 1966.
2. 'Young painter placed among country's best'. *The Press*, 21 December 1965.
3. Julie Catchpole, *The Group, Masters Thesis, Art History, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 1984, p.28.*
4. 'International Print and Local Society of Arts'. *The Press*, 7 April 1962.
5. John Simpson, 'Group Show One Of The Best Of Year'. *The Press*, 3 November 1964.
6. Hamish Keith, *New Zealand Painting 1965*, Auckland City Art Gallery, (November, 1965).
7. John Oakley, 'Contemporary N.Z. Show is Depressing'. *The Christchurch Star*, (Baverstock Papers: 1880-1975), 1964.
8. *ibid.*
9. Interview with Philip Trusttun, 4 September 1990.
10. *ibid.*
11. Peter Cape, *New Zealand Painting Since 1960: A Study in Themes and Developments* (Auckland, 1979), p.10.
12. Hamish Keith, *The Development of Art in New Zealand*, (lectures), c.1969, p.24.
13. Gordon H. Brown and Hamish Keith, *An Introduction to New Zealand Painting 1839-1980* (Auckland, 1982), p.179.
14. James Ross, 'Philip Trusttun's Paintings of the 'Seventies'. *Art New Zealand*, vol 6, 1977, p.17.
15. *Philip Trusttun*. (catalogue), New Vision Gallery, April / May, 1965.
16. See n. 2.
17. 'Painting is tightrope but artist tries to keep his balance'. *The New Zealand Herald*, 27 August 1966.
18. *ibid.*
19. *Philip Trusttun: exhibition of New Paintings*. (catalogue), New Vision Gallery, August / September, 1966.
20. Mark Young, 'Dream land of innocence, joy' *The Auckland Star*, 26 August 1966.
21. See n. 11, p.15.
22. *ibid.*

23. See n. 1.
24. James Ross, Philip Trusttum: A Brief Chronology, National Art Gallery Research Collection, Wellington, c.1974, p.11.
25. David Barber, 'In New Environment'. *The Press*, 4 July 1967, p.13.
26. Ross Marwick, Painting: A Study of Philip Trusttum, Fine Arts(Honours), University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 1970, p.19.
27. *ibid.*
28. Philip Trusttum, reply to letter from H. J. Taylor, 29 April 1991.
29. See n. 25.
30. Bernard Smith, *Australian Painting 1788-1970* (Melbourne, 1971), p.426.
31. See n. 25.
32. See n. 25.
33. See n. 26, pp.21-22.
34. See n. 24, p.11.
35. Nikos Stangos, *Concepts of Modern Art* (London, 1974 - revised edition, 1981), p.130.
36. See n. 26, pp.36-37.
37. T.J. McNamara, 'Trusttum Works Explore Paint As Medium'. *The New Zealand Herald*, 22 April 1969.
38. *ibid.*
39. Vera Kubicková, *Persian Miniatures* (London), p.31.
40. See n. 37.
41. T.J. McNamara, 'Display of Superb Paintings: Impressive Work By Young Artist'. *The New Zealand Herald*, 3 May 1971.
42. Gil Docking, *Two Hundred Years of New Zealand Painting* (Wellington, 1971 - enlarged Michael Dunn Auckland, 1990), p.196.
43. *ibid.*
44. See n. 37.
45. See n. 11, p.22.

CHAPTER THREE

CHANGE AND RENEWAL 1972 - 1980.

'I refuse to let myself be restricted to any one genre, any one climate, any one theme'.¹

(Hugo Claus)

In 1972 Philip Trusttum had lost sight of his direction as an artist. While he had the time to devote to his painting, at this stage he was largely unsure of how best to use it.

During 1970 and 1971, Trusttum, willing to experiment with new ideas, tried to extend the conventional boundaries of the two-dimensional surface. With a long-term interest in texture and creating illusions of space, mass and light, he began to explore the medium of collage and attached small but 'real' objects on to his hardboard support.

Collage had initially been invented by the Cubists in 1912, for example Picasso's *Still Life with Chaircaning* (1912), 'as a means of exploring the differences between representation and reality'.² During 1972 Trusttum primarily sought an art form which offered greater freedom and involvement in the working process. He wanted to expose, rather than hide, the raw materials and construction of an art work.

For inspiration Trusttum by-passed the Dadaists and the Surrealists and looked towards Pop Art. In the hands of the 'post-war generation' collage had

developed into the 'art of assemblage'. Edward Lucie-Smith describes this art as:

a means of creating works of art almost entirely from pre-existing elements, where the artist's contribution was to be found more in making the links between objects, putting them together, than in making objects *ab initio*.³

Assemblage had greatly extended an artist's range of materials to include virtually any article or substance that was conveniently at hand: from paper and fabric, to plastic and chrome. Rather than just glueing articles to a two-dimensional support, they could instead be nailed, cemented, bolted or riveted together, put in bags, wrapped or tied up, sealed or soldered.

The idea of 'making and constructing' was to involve much of Trusttum's energy during 1972. The 'art of assemblage' not only provided him with greater artistic freedom, it also created an outlet for his long-term interest in the 'working processes'. Confident about his new findings, he decided to exhibit this 'different chapter' of his development.

In Auckland Trusttum's assemblages (pl. 9) caught the attention of Michael Dunn:

Of considerable interest is a construction by the young Christchurch painter Philip Trusttum. It has a gay abandon rarely encountered in New Zealand painting.⁴

In Wellington Peter Cape commented that Trusttun had created 'areas of sometimes quite startling beauty' in his 'non-mathematical, apparently random, ready-made constructions'.⁵

G. T[revor] M[offitt] a reviewer for the *Press*, Christchurch, however, found Trusttun's latest creations somewhat puzzling:

In these works he has moved into the area of three-dimensional assemblages in a way that is unsculptural, some times whimsical, but difficult to accept in conventional painting terms.⁶

Because Trusttun had cut-short the sophisticated stylistic development of 1966-1971, to concentrate on a collection of 'found objects', the Christchurch reviewer believed that the artist had created works that were 'almost a negation of all his previous endeavours':

There is a pulsating energy in all the assembled pieces, combined with aggressiveness which suggests this work is an attempt on Trusttun's part to rid himself of any sophistication by resorting to methods of assembly that are crude to the point of being primitive.⁷

Trusttun produced a 'dozen or so' of these 'primitive' constructions during 1972. As they no longer exist, photographs and reviews provide the only clues as to what these three-dimensional forms actually looked like.

Trusttun's 'Constructions' (pl. 9) generally consisted of an assortment of usable objects 'recycled' and assembled by the artist to form non-functional art works. The artist utilised virtually anything that he could find: feathers, a hat, an old coat, children's toys, cotton wool, tubes of paint, pastels, beads, pins and

magnets; rope, wire, pieces of mirror, insulating material, even a table and a chair were included in Trusttum's work.

Panels were hinged together to form boxes or screens. And 'shapes modelled in plasticine and papier mache, dyed cloth, string and plastic bags filled with water'⁸ were affixed to supports or enclosed by these arrangements.

For example, in *Container*, 'various elements are enclosed in a box structure making an intimate setting into which the viewer has to peer and probe for each new sensation'. *Aftermath*, by contrast was a 'more openly conceived arrangement' that could be 'viewed in major part from any direction'.⁹

In these works Trusttum's primary concern was with material and process; building with real textures, mass, light and space to create a structure of amusing contrasts and comparisons. He was not interested in reproducing or monumentalising something 'recognisable', akin to Rauschenberg's *Bed* (1955), for example. Instead, Trusttum combined and juxtaposed the 'real' to create an abstraction.

One of the major reasons for turning to the 'art of assemblage' was to sever his ties with his past artistic development. Successful in his endeavour to break free, perhaps believing that he had strayed too far from his initial course, Trusttum soon discovered that the 'Constructions' were not steering him towards a direction he wanted to take. They were 'leading him into areas in which he would have liked the assistance of an architect, builder or engineer'.¹⁰

Technically, they were beyond his capabilities, and as a result he was unable to achieve all that he had anticipated. Regardless of his technical limitations, however, he felt that both sensation and illusion were missing from the constructions: they were too real, too concrete. Of this period Trusttum recalled that it was a, 'form of illness, but very necessary, for even in illness, and [it is] a form of escapism, you never escape from yourself and you learn'.¹¹

From this exercise he learnt that he had more control over the two dimensional, and consequently more freedom to fulfil his aims. While the jump from painting to assemblage had been necessary, Trusttum soon abandoned this course. By the end of 1972 the artist was again confused about what to do next. The 'constructions' had provided no real clues. He was back to where he had been at the end of 1971, and unsure of how to proceed.

Gopas had taught Trusttum to continue to teach himself after art school, to 'return to the well of nature as the ever-renewable source',¹² and to learn from other artists' discoveries. When Trusttum was awarded a Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council grant in 1972, it came as a welcome relief and provided the painter with the opportunity to study the modern twentieth-century leaders of art at first hand. Late that year the family left for a nine-month tour of Europe and the United States.

Visiting England, Holland, Madrid and New York, Trusttum saw works by El Greco, Cézanne, van Gogh, Matisse, Rouault, and Beckmann. These artists' paintings restored his faith in art. It showed him that more could be achieved with paint and canvas than he had imagined. This visual education gave Trusttum a new sense of purpose.

On his return to New Zealand in 1973 Trusttun was eager to experiment with the styles he had observed and absorbed in Europe. Evidence of this experience appeared immediately in his work, resulting in a dramatic reversal of his style.

Nineteen-seventy-three marked a 'renewal of his love affair with the qualities of oil paint, and of his interest in what may loosely be termed the natural world'.¹³

The artistic movement that was to have the strongest impact on his work during 1973 and 1974 was Post-Impressionism. Trusttun's first paintings to be inspired by Europe were a large series of self-portraits. Using his own image as a vehicle for working through the various styles he had encountered, Trusttun did not intend to exhibit these works. While he never really distorted the image, it is broken into broad planes of colour, or fragmented with visible brush-strokes. His colours are 'post-impressionist', using greens, purples, and reds for skin. With each portrait Trusttun learned from the Post-Impressionists, assimilating their ideas and taking them a step further.

Uncomfortable with recording personal likenesses, Trusttun decided to change his subject matter. Landscape offered a more impersonal base for his technique.

Continuing to be influenced by Post-Impressionism, this style enabled Trusttun to paint natural things without having to interpret them truthfully. The Post-Impressionists believed that art must move away from the 'error of naturalism' and become more abstract. Gauguin declared:

Don't paint too much from nature. Art is an abstraction. Extract it from nature by meditating in front of it, and think more of the creation which will result.¹⁴

Asserting that 'colour was one of the first elements in painting that could be treated abstractly', Gauguin once asked a student:

How do you see these trees? They are yellow. Well then, put down yellow. And that shadow is rather blue. So render it with pure ultramarine. Those red leaves? Use vermilion.¹⁵

The work of the Post-Impressionists revealed to Trusttum that there was a vast variety of ways to apply paint to a support. Van Gogh, however, was the artist who inspired Trusttum in his rediscovery of himself. Trusttum recalled of his experience, that Van Gogh and living in France 'got me going again spiritually'.¹⁶ He admired Van Gogh's expressive use of paint and colour; the effects Van Gogh achieved were qualities that Trusttum desired in his own work he too wanted to enliven his canvases with light, colour and energy.

His subject matter during 1973 and 1974 not only consisted of anonymous fragments of foliage, but also scenes from his studio windows and views of the surrounding urban environment. Stunned by Van Gogh's use of intense colour and writhing forms, Trusttum's landscape paintings also began to sparkle and 'breathe' in this manner. In *Untitled* (1973) he had loaded his brush heavily and applied paint as if straight from the tube. Individual brush-strokes are frenzied and hectic, and bounded by ridges of texture.

His colours are luscious combinations of deep greens and blues, brilliant reds and dazzling yellows. *Garden Series* (1973), for example, is glowing with life, his palette is radiant; his treatment of form is textured and spontaneous.

Resembling Van Gogh's interpretation of natural forms, Trusttum's images also possess a sense of urgency. The flaming bushes in *House on the Hill* (1973), twisting and swirling upwards into stormy skies, are reminiscent of Van Gogh's *Cypresses* (1889).

One other artist to affect Trusttum's style at this time was Henri Matisse. *Yellow Interior* (1973) and *Interior and Hedge* (c.1974) (pl. 11) combine Van Gogh's impulsive expression with Matisse's 'cool head'. In both works the compositions consist of the garden viewed from Trusttum's studio window. Like Matisse, Trusttum developed an interest in pattern and design. In *Yellow Interior* and *Interior and Hegde* the inside of his studio is depicted in broad planes of pure colour surrounded by bold black outlines; areas of paint are precise and confined. Outside the studio window, however, the forms are active and contorted, his treatment of surface is broken and undefined, reminiscent of Van Gogh's style.

During 1973-74 Trusttum also experimented with another subtly different development. In a number of paintings his technique is more fragile and linear. Continuing to paint scenes from his garden, Trusttum's canvas 'shattered' into a multitude of tiny colour fragments. In *Sou' Wester* (1974) 'wind' whips through the composition, leaving an energetic tangle of lines and a network of vibrant yellows, reds and blues in its path.

At this time he also shifted his subject matter from the backyard to the city and its surrounding countryside. With *City View, Christchurch No. 2* (1973), Trusttun has developed a more personal blend of Van Gogh and Matisse. His technique is whimsical, almost sketch-like, with rickety, jagged buildings and cranes cutting into the Christchurch sky-line. His approach is not as heavy and tortured as Van Gogh's paintings, nor is it as flat and defined as Matisse's compositions, Trusttun's style in *City View* is an animated, intricate and intensely colourful treatment of form.

Painting from the landscape during 1973 and 1974 provided the artist with an entirely new challenge. Dealing with his subject matter from a conventional viewpoint meant that he had to tackle pictorial perspective in order to create an illusion of depth. In *Red Berries and Blue Sky* (1973) (pl. 10) foreground and background are successfully defined by juxtaposing bright colours with dark. Light blue, green and yellow leaves and rich red berries contrast with a pure Prussian Blue sky.

In paintings like *Yellow Interior* and *Interior and Hedge* (pl. 11), Trusttun found the window frame to be a useful device in achieving a greater sense of depth. For example, the windows in *Interior and Hedge* have broken the picture plane into two different levels, with the interior in the foreground and the hedge in the background. Inside the studio, palettes, paintings and sheets are propped one against the other to accentuate recession. The artist's colour also adds to the illusion: warm red walls contrast with cooler greens and yellow outside, allowing the foreground to 'spring' forward.

Although by 1974 Trusttun's confidence in painting had been restored, it had taken him over a year to detach himself from the impact of his European experience. Up until this time, his personal vision had been somewhat obscured by the influence of Post-Impressionism. However, Trusttun's 'post-impressionism' was favourably received by the critics and the public alike.

In October 1973 Hamish Keith reviewed five of Trusttun's 'Garden' paintings from a group show at the New Vision Gallery and declared that they 'must rate as his most mature pieces to date'. He also stated that any resemblance to Van Gogh was 'mainly a superficial one'.¹⁷

One month earlier, G. T[revor] M[offitt], of the *Christchurch Press*, acknowledged the Post-Impressionist influence on Trusttun. He saw that there were 'echoes' of 'Cézanne, Matisse, and van Gogh' in Trusttun's paintings, but again the reviewer had overlooked its extent:

To treat his work as just representing good examples of mannerist painting would be unfair, for if ever New Zealand has produced a painter who loved and can use paint, that person is Philip Trusttun.¹⁸

Michael Dunn, however, did not overlook Trusttun's 'post-impressionism'. He observed that the artist, 'responded enthusiastically to Van Gogh's work to such an extent that his own painting now appears as an exercise in Van Gogh's style'.¹⁹ Although the reviewer recognised what Trusttun was doing he could not understand why:

What Trusttum is doing and doing well is re-working ideas about paint and painting made familiar by Van Gogh and transplanting them into a local situation. This jars on the sensibilities when we know that Trusttum has been painting now for ten years and is capable of evolving his own way of seeing.²⁰

It is obvious from Michael Dunn's conclusions and from an examination of Trusttum's 1973 and 1974 paintings that Van Gogh's influence is not just 'superficial', nor can it be overlooked. This period of work was not the product of a 'mature' Trusttum, but of one who was still learning and growing as an artist. Regardless of popular and critical appeal, Trusttum's links with the Post-Impressionists were 'too obvious'; he was too heavily indebted to Van Gogh's style for 1972 to 1974 to be considered as an accomplished phase in his development. Van Gogh's art had restored Trusttum's faith, but not his individuality, because up until 1974 his own style had failed to develop into something unmistakably Trusttum.

In a desire to learn more about paint and painting, Trusttum soon grew away from Van Gogh and the landscape and began to explore other possible directions. For a brief period between mid 1974 and 1975 he experimented with a combination of internationally inspired styles. While the strongest creative source at this stage was Matisse, Trusttum also renewed his interest in Paul Klee.

Trusttum returned to a more personal subject matter, that of recording his family and their everyday activities. Two examples of the artist's shift in content was his preoccupation with his children's games, toys and musical instruments. In *Rockhorse* (1974) Trusttum recorded the frantic play of a child

on a rocking horse, while in *Xylophone* (1974) he simulated colourful vibrations of sound.

Trusttum's work from late 1974 is more closely related in content and intention to what he was producing in 1966, than to his style six months earlier. Aside from a variety of stylistic influences during 1974 his overall shift in technique tended to be towards greater abstraction. Although his subject matter was from 'real life', images are distorted and ambiguous. Within the same painting or among a group of paintings Trusttum tended to alternate between the decorative and the simplified, ignoring both sequence and consistency.

Two examples of Trusttum's diversification during the latter half of 1974 are *Hannah on the Rocking Horse* (pl. 12), and *Xylophone*. The composition of *Hannah on the Rocking Horse* consists of an aerial view of his daughter riding a red and white rocking horse. Because of the view-point, the child and the horse have been both simplified and distorted. The whole surface of the painting is active and 'alive'. The mood is one of enjoyment and pleasure.

With its vibrant combination of colour and juxtaposition of techniques, his decorative composition is reminiscent of Matisse's style during the late 1930s. Trusttum's treatment of form and handling of paint is similar to that which Matisse developed in *Odalisque with Striped Dress* (1937) and *Lady in Blue* (1937). Trusttum's composition is flattened, simplified and defined. He has broken the two-dimensional surface into patches of pure colour and decorative detail, each area is contained by pale outlines. Alongside the flat regions of yellow and red paint, the artist has juxtaposed a delicate network of pattern,

varying shades of blue and purple, yellow and red lines, dots and dashes 'dance' across the white ground beneath. Paint is thin and untextured, at times sketch-like in its application.

Hannah on the Rocking Horse reveals one direction that Trusttun was taking during 1974, *Xylophone* captures another. In *Xylophone* Trusttun has turned to Klee for inspiration. The impact of this modern master's early 1930s works on Trusttun's vision was immense. It had affected his whole perception of subject matter.

In 1932 Klee painted *Vor Anker* and *Ad Parnassum*, in these two works he developed what is known as the 'divisionist' technique; small dashes or dots of paint cover the entire canvas:

It was not the construction of lines, stripes, and surfaces that formed the space, but light. Drops of different colours plunged the surface of the image in shimmering light, light arose from colour, movement from light and space from movement.²¹

It was with this technique that Trusttun experimented in 1974. The composition of *Xylophone* consists of abstract geometric shapes, the identity of form is difficult to determine, only discs and triangles stand out. Using a similar approach to Klee, in his painting *Ad Parnassum*, Trusttun has built up the composition with varying layers of paint.

To begin with he has covered the support with patches of flat colour; overlaying these confined regions of paint, are masses of staccato brush marks. Tiny dabs of jewel-like colour alternating between yellows, blues and reds

'move' in an ordered fashion across zones of red blue and yellow. The whole surface 'quivers' and 'vibrates' with colour.

During 1974 Trusttun was indebted to the leaders of modern art, James Ross explains that, 'as an artist Trusttun has ruthlessly scavenged the work of other artists for clues on how to enliven his brushwork, as well as for forms to carry his ideas'.²²

Having 'solved one set of painterly problems' he moved quickly onto the next. During 1974 Trusttun openly moved between the styles of Van Gogh, Matisse, and Klee, combining their ideas and assimilating their influence to eventually discover his own personal blend of their innovations.

By the end of 1974 his direction was again uncertain. There was still no indication that he was going to commit himself to any one artistic development. Was he moving towards greater abstraction and control, or was he going to 'fragment' his canvas into a myriad of dazzling colours? The artist showed no desire to work through his ideas in a consistent manner.

As 1975 began Trusttun was ready to move on. He wanted to learn all he could about his medium, to see what else could be achieved with paint on a two-dimensional support. As a result another major break occurred in his development. For six months during 1975 the Trusttun family travelled again to Europe, visiting England, France, Switzerland and Holland.

In reference to Trusttun's first European trip in 1972, Michael Dunn recalled that:

It has been said that no local painter should leave the country until he is past forty - let us hope that for Trusttun this advice went unheeded for his ultimate good not harm.²³

However, in 1975 T. L. R[odney] W[ilson] of the Christchurch *Press* observed that:

Trusttun has needed fully two years to emerge from a first European experience. One can only hope that the trip to Europe which Trusttun is making at present will not seriously impede continued development.²⁴

As it turned out his second excursion was to have quite the opposite effect. Rather than obscuring his personal vision, on his return to New Zealand recollections of this experience were to feed his imagination for the next four years.

The artist left for Europe in the latter half of 1975. However, up until this time he had continued to work in a 'Post-Impressionist' manner. The paintings *Joker* (pl. 13) and the 'African Head' series, belong to this period. *Joker* has been inspired by a deck of playing cards; *African Head III* appears to be based on a 'primitive' mask. While the subject matter is unrelated, he has treated each work in a similar way, the emphasis is on flat form and bold colour.

With defined zones of colour Trusttun builds the composition of *African Head III*. Red dominates the painting, the paint is untextured. but neither precise nor smooth. Oil paint has been applied quickly and roughly some passages

alternate between the dense and the transparent, others are left completely untouched by colour.

Joker is a more detailed work. Its composition is constructed in a number of randomly placed forms on a flat red ground. Many of its images continue beyond the painting's boundaries. The shapes alternate between the recognisable and the surreal. As well as cards, hearts, clubs and diamonds, the letters K, E, and R are also scattered across the surface of the work perhaps alluding to the final letters of the title.

Like in a Matisse painting, Trusttum contrasts subdued areas with busy decorative passages, he delights in creating interesting and varied surfaces. Because of these juxtapositions and his free arrangement of forms even the most simplified compositions appear uncontrolled and spontaneous.

In Europe Trusttum revived his enthusiasm for a number of the leaders of modern art and he re-assessed the artists he had previously over-looked. He visited collections of Paul Klee's work in Switzerland and re-examined Matisse's art in France. While Joan Miró was to have a greater impact on Trusttum's art and thought, the artist recalled that he was 'impressed more by Cézanne'.²⁵

Trusttum's second European experience marked another shift in his development. Providing a wealth of visual stimulus, rather than inspiring him to explore new ways of applying paint as in 1972, Trusttum discovered that there were different paints and different surfaces to apply them to. Over

the past fifteen years, apart from his 'Constructions', he had generally painted with oil on board.

On his return to New Zealand he embarked on a period of exploration to determine what materials and what combinations best suited him.

In 1976 he investigated a variety of supports and media; from jute, hessian and unstretched canvas to acrylic paints and coloured papers. Working with these new materials offered new technical challenges and what he produced marked the beginning of a period of personal discovery. However, before this individual development occurred he first went through a brief phase of experimentation as he assimilated what he had encountered in Europe.

His pictorial content during this time alternates between recording personal experience and lively geometric abstraction. In *Hannah Painting* (1976) Trusttun captures a whimsical portrayal of his daughter painting. This picture possesses the same spontaneity that belongs to his sketches. It is an energetic but delicate work. The dominant colours are soft blues and yellows, paint is applied in gentle washes, at times exposing the white ground beneath.

With *Untitled* (1976) and *Squares* (1976), Trusttun moves into the realm of abstraction, and experiments with oil on jute and hessian supports. Trusttun would have seen examples of coarse open weave canvas being used as a support in Europe. Paul Klee frequently employed heavy sacking or loose unprimed canvas in his works. For instance, *Small fir tree* (1922) and *Captive* (1940).

Trusttum would also have encountered its use closer to home. During the 1960s Gopas investigated different surfaces as he became increasingly captivated by texture. In Gopas's paintings *Red and Blue* (1964) and *Nebula* (1969) he painted with P.V.A. on hessian that was bound to ivory board. Philip Clairmont, a student of Gopas's from 1967 to 1970, repeatedly used hessian supports throughout his career, for example, *Interior triptych* (1970) and *Butterfly mirror with violet flowers* (1974).

Rough unprimed jute offered artists a more flexible, textured surface to work with. The uneven consistency of the support provided an interesting surface before it was even touched by layers of paint. In *Untitled* (1976) Trusttum only partially covered the jute canvas with 'dry, crusty' oil paint, allowing the raw jute to show through. As a result Klee-like forms and mysterious graphics appear to float within an airy composition.

Trusttum's interest in different textures soon prompted him to experiment with cut coloured paper as a substitute for paint. In the paper works he was initially inspired by Matisse's *papiers découpés* of the late 1940s, particularly those he created for his book *Jazz*, published in 1947.

Among the many who have worked with collage are Picasso and Braque, Klee, Miró and Arp, Duchamp and Picabia. For Man Ray collage was one medium that enabled him to 'paint without a brush, canvas or palette'.²⁶

Matisse believed that, 'scissors can acquire more feeling for line than pencil or charcoal, 'draw in colour with a pair of scissors'.²⁷ While other artists used

magazines, newspapers and photos, in his quest for simplicity, Matisse would use only coloured paper.

Matisse discovered this new technique quite by accident. During the 1930s he had 'paper models to help design his paintings, moving them around on his canvases to find the perfect placement of figures'.²⁸ In 1941 when illness prevented him from painting at the easel, he began to work again with paper.

Following Matisse's lead, Trusttum put aside his brush and took up a pair of scissors in 1976. From sheets of coloured paper he would cut out a variety of shapes and paste them on to a cardboard support. Until the shapes are pasted, the arrangement is not permanent. The cut-out allowed the artist to 'shift forms and seek out relationships without changing the ground on which he worked'.²⁹

In *Driving Before Rain* (1976) the delicate abstract fragments of coloured paper - greens, blues, reds and white, appear at first glance to have been placed at random on the surface. On closer inspection rain-drops and car windscreen wipers begin to take shape, floating amongst a number of ambiguous forms.

The cut-out enabled Trusttum to contain colour within defined zones. He could overlap these zones without one hue bleeding into the other. By placing one fragment of paper over another he could also create a sense of depth without pictorial perspective.

Collage however, did not hold Trusttum's attention for long. T.J. McNamara's comments in a review of Trusttum's 'cut-outs' provide a possible explanation as to why his interest in cut-paper was so brief.

Why a painter of his superb gifts in the handling of paint should want to give away his virtuosity and all its manifold charms of texture and surface in order to work with flat paper is a mystery that could only be justified with results. It is an exhibition of unexpected delight, but one that does not seem to engage the artist's talent to the full.³⁰

Having examined a variety of media during 1976 Trusttum's most significant finding from his investigation of other artists' materials was the unstretched canvas. Compared to board or the stretched canvas support, loose canvas offered both practical and aesthetic advantages for the artist. With no backing or frame, it provided a flexible surface that could be rolled up and therefore transported and stored easily. The loose support also required very little preparation before painting could begin. This flexibility and ease of handling enabled Trusttum to paint even larger works than before. Its casual, unsophisticated appearance also appealed to the artist.

During that same year Trusttum also began to experiment with a more flexible medium than oils, acrylic paint. Having used acrylics briefly at the beginning of the 'seventies, Trusttum soon found its properties more suitable for his method of working than oil paint. Acrylic paints are compatible with a wide variety of surfaces, they can be applied to almost any absorbent support. Soluble in water, they dry quickly and evenly. They can also stand up very well to the furling and unrolling of canvas. They are more adaptable

than oils, and Trusttun began to explore the full potential of his new medium.

Out of this brief period of experimentation with new techniques and materials, Trusttun discovered that for him the most favourable were acrylics on unstretched canvas. Both the support and the paint were durable and flexible and quick and easy to handle. Trusttun had at last found a combination that encouraged a spontaneous, unrefined, uninhibited approach. For the next fifteen years this combination was to dominate his art. The group of works from 1976 that best illustrate Trusttun's achievement with his new materials is his 'Banners' series.

Exhibited at the Bosshard Galleries in Dunedin, Trusttun's 'Banners' were his most substantial and significant collective output during 1976. The information sheet that accompanied the exhibition informed the spectator that the content of the show was based on Trusttun's experience in Europe. Like all travellers the artist and his family were issued with,

vaccination certificates, passports, tickets, car hire agreements, etc. . . For the traveller these pieces of paper are sometimes unintelligible and can carry some magic. Mr Trusttun's paintings have been inspired by the magic and are based on the documents he carried.³¹

Having collected and saved these mundane scraps of paper, on his return to New Zealand the artist re-examined his mementoes and, delighted by their intricacy and organised chaos, he re-arranged and transformed this official documentation into a series of large, brilliantly coloured, mysterious works of art.

The exhibition consisted of twenty-two works which ranged in size; from *Train* at 380mm x 165mm, to *Homage to Avis* at 1960mm x 4228mm and price; the exhibition typesheet recorded that the prices ranged between \$95 for *de 3 (4)* and \$1500 for *Back Home*.

The unstretched canvases were pinned informally to the wall, unframed, some were deliberately torn at the edges, while others were roughly sewn together. Even though their presentation deliberately resembled a crumpled or ripped document, his treatment of this subject matter, its colour and design, was at times very distant from its initial source.

For example in *Museum Miró*, Trusttum has been inspired by a stamp on a museum pass. A large freely drawn circle dominates the canvas. The acrylic paint is dry and blurred, it is irregular and does not cover the entire surface. Across these unfocussed patches of colour Trusttum has thrown a net of calligraphy in blue, purple, black, pink, yellow and orange, creating a dense and busy composition with two distinctive layers and a limited sense of depth.

Homage to Avis (pl. 14), however, is closer in its appearance to its original source. A life-size interpretation of a rental car document, Trusttum has retained the rich colour and word scrawls of *Museum Miró*, but it is here that the similarities end. *Homage to Avis* is a larger, open, more simplified work. The unstretched canvas has been stained with mottled reds, yellows and browns. The composition is divided each colour has been confined to separate zones by rich brown lines, resembling a page from a receipt book. Letters, numbers, signs and symbols also appear in these separate regions of colour.

Unlike *Museum Miró*, these calligraphic forms do not build the layers of the composition. Instead they are thin fragile scrawls in black that seem to have been scratched into the surface of the picture plane.

Trusttun's 'Banners' were not his first works to employ the written word, for example *No* (1964-65), *Martin's Playtime* (1966), and *Chesspieces* (1967). Frequently used by other artists, words have appeared in painting for a variety of reasons, and throughout the twentieth-century their function on canvas has altered with each artistic movement.

The Cubists introduced words largely through collage; newspaper and magazine clippings. Often being the only recognisable images in a painting, words acted as positive structural components within the abstract composition. As well as providing a link with reality, words were also used to emphasise the two-dimensional nature of the canvas.

Written words have two main properties, their visual appearance and their conventional linguistic meaning. These properties could be exploited separately or combined by the artist. Jasper Johns believed that because words and numbers come in the category of 'things the mind already knows', they therefore gave him the 'room to work on other levels'.³² For Johns they were recognisable decorative objects with a purely decorative function.

The conceptual artists apply words strictly for their linguistic meaning, either isolated or in sentence form, to express their ideas and decisions and to broach complex non-visual issues. Words in this context were intended to be read and analysed. In New Zealand, artists like Colin McCahon, Ralph Hotere and

Rudolf Gopas also used words, but this time to form a painted poetry. These hand-written words on colour or black and white were intended to be read, as well as absorbed by the senses.

Since the 1960s, although only briefly, Trusttum has utilised words in a variety of ways. In *No* (1964-65) the word is the subject matter, as well as the title of the work; the only recognisable form, it dominates the painting. With *Martin's Playtime* and *Chesspieces* words are merely decorative accessories that merge with his calligraphic style. In his 'Banners' series of 1976, however, Trusttum employs word forms largely for their visual appearance. In *Museum Miró*, for example, words have no linguistic function. As they already belong to his subject matter, of stamps and documents, it is only logical that he should include them in his painting. However, these colourful hand-written scrawls are not intended to be read, they only resemble words or word fragments, they do not form recognisable linguistic structures. The main function of Trusttum's network of calligraphy is to build up the composition and to enliven the surface of the canvas. They are not there to involve the viewer actively in his work.

The 'Banner' paintings signaled a turning point in Trusttum's development. During 1976 T.J. McNamara had commented that, 'Philip Trusttum has been through his Van Gogh period recently and now he is into his Matisse period following the master into the creation of works in cut paper'.³³

While this remark aptly describes the dominant influences on Trusttum's work at that time, McNamara gives the artist little credit for his own ideas. With the 'Banners' series however, outside influence is not as easy to identify

as before. Although Trusttum is still inspired by other painters' styles, these have been assimilated and transformed by Trusttum into an artistic 'vocabulary' that can be more readily claimed as his own.

While there were a few interruptions between 1976 and 1979, Trusttum was to return frequently to examine and explore the 'Banners' style further. Derek Schulz, in an article for *Art New Zealand*, saw the 'Banner' paintings as marking the 'end of the beginning of Trusttum's art. The control that Trusttum had been working towards since 1974 has at last appeared in a wholly original form'.³⁴

After the 'Banners' Trusttum briefly experimented with a more simplified minimal approach. His haphazard development of 1976 continued, with acrylic on canvas either unstretched or attached to hardboard. Three examples of his diversity are *Hannah's Swing*, *Front Wheel*, and *Patience II* (pl. 15). Although these three works are diverse in their appearance as well as an interest in everyday surroundings and events, they do have a number of stylistic qualities in common.

They each share a minimum of detail and colour, and an emphasis on line; paint is dry and flat, there is no texture and large areas of canvas have been left untouched. The most colourful of the three is *Hannah's Swing*. A rectangular space of warm yellow dominates the composition, framed by a deep red and browns. The object of the artist's attention is an unfocussed depiction of a child's swing; a ghost-like shadow only partially defined by a strand of rope and the edge of the seat.

Trusttum uses abstracted, surreal, magical images in *Front Wheel*. The style of this work recalls the lyrical oils of 1968/69, except the lines of colour do not shimmer and sparkle like those oil paintings the acrylic has seeped into the canvas providing a flat matt finish. *Front Wheel* is a Miró-esque depiction of a bicycle wheel. It has been elongated and broken into a sweeping curve. The emphasis is on line, the tyre is defined, while the spokes are merely suggested. The whole wheel is then surrounded by a hazy mist of paint. Dots, circles and other lines imply the movement and motion of the wheel.

With these works Trusttum expresses an interest in geometrical design and flattened space. *Patience II* continues this trend. The composition of this work consists of twelve circles on a white background. Although it is a composition of geometric simplicity, the artist has not turned to hard-edged abstraction; his forms are still irregular and unrestrained. Some circles consist of unfocussed outlines, others have no outline and are constructed by dots and smudges. *Patience II* is a sketchy delicate painting each image has been lightly imprinted upon the canvas with hazy wisps of paint surrounding them. There is no boundary to the composition and no stability. Forms appear to hover on the two-dimensional surface.

Nineteen-seventy-six had been a year of renewal for Trusttum, a time of discovering both new materials and a new direction. As 1977 began, Trusttum realised that he had not worked through the ideas and the technical challenges offered by the 'Banner' paintings. Instead of tickets, hotel bills and maps, however, the artist was inspired by his environment and experiences. Although the style of three 1977 works, *Hannah off to School at the Age of Five* (pl. 16), *Edie*, and *Collin's Cover*, differs slightly from the

'Banners'(1976), these works provide a valuable link between the 'Banner' paintings and what he was to produce in 1978.

From 1977 to 1979 there are signs of a recognisable progression from one work to another. Some works stand out as taking a different direction from others, but change is generally not so radical as before. His sources are also not as easy to identify, nor is his style as clear-cut as his so-called 'Van Gogh' and 'Matisse' periods.

In 1977 Trusttun returned to painting abundant colourful canvases. Influenced by the work of Klee and Miró, Trusttun produced abstractions of reality. For example, *Hannah off to School at the Age of Five* (pl. 16), is a rich, mysterious painting. Warm deep colours - blues, reds and browns - cover the entire canvas. The paint is dry, creating a mottled uneven surface. Because of these varying shades of light and dark, the canvas appears to have been lit from behind; it glows like a stained glass window in sunshine.

The composition is fragmented and divided by black diagonals that form a diamond shape at the centre of the painting. This diamond is filled with an irregular patchwork of pale and rich blue squares, reminiscent of a child's school uniform. Across the patchwork is the letter H and the number 5, alluding to the title of the work and its subject matter, Hannah at the age of 5.

Some passages of *Hannah off to School* bring to mind phases of Klee's technical development. The dark outlines and 'leadlight' effect of Trusttun's work recall Klee's paintings of the late 1930s, particularly *St Anthony after the Temptation* (1935) and *Attitude of a Face I* (1939). His interest in abstract

patchworks of colour also stems from Klee. In the 1920s Klee covered entire canvases with a kaleidoscope of painted patches. *Ancient Sound* (1925), for example, is an abstract of squares on a black background.

Lying to the left-hand side of the canvas in *Hannah off to School* is that familiar hand-written scrawl that Trusttum had employed so often in his 'Banners' series. At this stage the dark red string of paint does not occupy a central position, nor does it build up the composition. It only appears as another interesting inhabitant of the canvas.

Characteristics of the style used in *Hannah off to School at the Age of Five*, combined with elements of his 'Banners' style continued into other works during 1977 and 1978; the density, the glowing colour and the hovering calligraphy all appear again and again, along with the dry paint rubbed and dabbed onto the surface producing a mottled uneven finish that resembles crumpled coloured paper; the tendency to break the canvas into patterns - diamonds, triangles, squares and circles; the use of rich colour; and the limited recession into depth.

Within this style Trusttum would alternate between energy and restraint. Some compositions would consist of all of these elements, while others would be simplified modifications of the same development. *Collin's Cover* (1977), for example, was Trusttum in a more restrained mood. The artist has coated a large sheet of unstretched canvas with a light brown paint, uneven in consistency and hurriedly applied. Over this mottled surface is a large broken, deep blue diagonal stripe, two black diagonal lines enclose the partially obscured letters C, L, and N. The remainder of the canvas is covered with

jottings, doodles, numerals, sums and scribbles that are so often found on the covers of notebooks. Compared to the clustered surface of *Hannah off to School at the Age of Five*, *Collin's Cover* is a sparse, open composition it is as cool and flat as a sheet of cardboard.

Between 1977 and 1979 Trusttun developed his 'Banners' style further, exploring different approaches and combinations and creating tighter, looser, busier and quieter, controlled and uncontrolled compositions. Trusttun continued to paint with acrylics on unstretched canvas, his paintings from this period are 'all inter-connected, and at the same time fall naturally into related groupings, depending upon the techniques and processes employed'.³⁵

During 1977 the artist held two exhibitions that reviewed the past seventeen years. The first public and private assessment of *Paintings by Philip Trusttun: exhibition in his home* was held in Christchurch. This show included the 'Banners' series and other 1970s works. The second exhibition, held at the New Vision Gallery in Auckland, included paintings from 1968 to 1976.

These shows gave Trusttun a chance to assess his own development. Also 'feeling less possessive' and 'less nostalgic'³⁶ about his work, the artist began to cull his private collection. While he might not have been making radical shifts in his artistic development, on a more personal level his process of renewal and re-organisation was continuing, as he gradually let go of his of past.

Concentrating on his future, another major review of his work was held in Christchurch in June of 1978. Occupying both the C.S.A. and Brooke/Gifford

galleries, this exhibition was entitled *Recent Paintings and Early Works*. He showed fifty works at the C.S.A., twenty-six of these on unstretched canvas; and thirty-three works at the Brook/Gifford gallery. The two shows were primarily of his recent work and the prices ranged from \$25 to \$2,000.

Trusttum's inspiration for his abstract unstretched canvas works on display originated with his domestic environment and events.

On some levels the banners seem to be his most abstract and formal works to date, and yet on closer inspection they remain as close as ever to his experiences of everyday things.³⁷

Trusttum was inspired by the interior and ground plan of his home in works like *End Wall*, *Dark Wall*, *Plan of 34* and *Rooms*. Personal events like the acquisition of the family car, the making of a car port, and car trips were also sources for the artist's imagination.

With these paintings Trusttum's technique and treatment of the canvas develops smoothly from 1977. There are no obvious breaks, only a tendency towards an interest in more complex and varied surfaces, resulting in a brief revival of Trusttum's curiosity for mixed-media and three-dimensional forms. Moving from a subtle blend of paint and paper in *End Wall* (c 1978), to gluing 'found' objects onto the canvas in *Martin's and Hannah's* (c 1978) creating an, 'assemblage of paint, wire-netting, plastic soldiers, toy car chassis, wooden animals, and trees, and toy boxes all acting out a fanciful battle'.³⁸

Michael Thomas described these works as containing 'a sensitive use of media' and a 'clever juxtaposition of different materials'.³⁹ Aside from using the 'real' object on his canvas again, the majority of his paintings from 1978 continued to be acrylic on loose hanging canvas.

To the critics these exhibitions at the C.S.A. and the Brooke/Gifford galleries revealed Trusttun as having 'clearly regained his own path'.⁴⁰ Michael Thomas commented that:

Similarities to a host of other artists could be found but these are only 'peripheral'. Each painting has a particularly individual essence which is unmistakeable; it would be impossible to mistake a Trusttun for the work of any other painter.⁴¹

T.L. Rodney Wilson observed that:

After a five year interregnum following his first trip to Europe in 1972, Trusttun has now worked through a most disruptive first-hand experience of European painting.⁴²

With these major exhibitions of 1978, Wilson found the artist to be 'more vigorous and monumental than ever'. He viewed Trusttun's 1977 and 1978 work as a 'statement of regained assurance and confidence'.⁴³

This period of regained 'confidence' was to be fleeting for Trusttun, lasting little over a year. In early 1979 the artist experienced a major personal crisis. He fell seriously ill with septicaemia (blood poisoning)⁴⁴ which immediately 'stopped his astonishingly prolific flow of work'.⁴⁵ It was to take him nine

months to fully recover physically; artistically, his 'assurance' and 'confidence' were shattered.

From his exhibition of late 1978, however, until his illness in 1979, Trusttun's development continued smoothly with no major stylistic breaks. Out of one personal artistic source during 1978 and 1979 Trusttun was to proceed along three varied, but inter-related, paths.

In 1978 these discoveries from over the past two years were to culminate in a rich and densely intricate treatment of the canvas surface. From this point Trusttun then proceeded to reduce the complexity of his work, producing variations on the same style.

Four works from this period, *Dark Entrance* (1978), *Ticket* (1978) *Darts* (c.1978/79) and *Height I.E. 8* (c. 1978/79) illustrate clearly how he alternates his approach within the same basic style. With *Ticket* (pl. 17) Trusttun repeats an identical compositional format to *Dark Entrance*, only his surface treatment is more detailed and colourful. Inspired by his surroundings Trusttun's composition for *Dark Entrance* is based on the ground plan of his home. The same ground plan is then transformed by the artist into a paper document by enriching the surface and changing the title to *Ticket*

These two paintings are variations on a linear grid-like design. Each painting has a controlled underlying geometry and gives the impression that Trusttun has developed the composition in a number of stages. The first stage is the dividing of the picture plane by painting a linear shell; in the second these divisions are filled in with a variety of colours; the third stage is when the

artist throws an intricate net of pattern, calligraphy and mysterious symbols across the entire canvas, creating a clustered complex surface.

Although there is a sense of geometric order, neither line nor paint is tight or defined. The dark line is scratchy and hazy at the edges. This 'quality of line' is reminiscent of Klee's frottage technique of transferring a drawing by printing or rubbing his designs through a sheet of paper coated with oil paint.

Trusttum's zones of colour - cool greens, oranges and browns in *Dark Entrance* and vibrant blues, reds, and greens in *Ticket* - are also unrestrained. He has applied paint in an uneven broken manner, creating a flat powdery pastel-like finish. His net of calligraphy disrupts this geometric order even further. Frenzied scrawlings and scribbles of red paint 'float' across the canvas, overlapping and breaking up his organised patchwork of colour. Words and word-like scrawlings appear to have been stamped or rubbed on to the surface by means of Klee's 'oil transfer' technique.

Within *Ticket* (pl. 17), the more intricate of the two paintings, the origins of *Darts* (pl. 18) and *Height I. E8* are found. From the initial appearance of these works it seems that Trusttum was taking an entirely different path and reviving an interest in the minimal. On closer inspection both works appear to represent one of the various stages involved in his more complex paintings. The composition of *Darts*, for example, resembles the overlying 'net' of patterns and shapes in *Ticket*, without the underlying geometric order.

The picture plane consists of a fragmented and reconstructed image of a dartboard on a white canvas ground. Mysterious symbols and pencil thin lines

float freely on the canvas. Like *Patience II* of 1976, the composition has no boundaries, it is open and free. As well as the loose, disjointed arrangement of forms resembling the intricate net of pattern in 'stage three' of *Ticket*, Trusttun's technique and handling of paint in *Darts* is also similar, with a continuation of the spontaneous and sketchy line, and the use of Klee's 'transfer' drawing style.

In *Height I.E.8*, Trusttun has continued to emphasize line and simplicity. Almost abandoning colour completely, only a few strips of murky yellow green and brown are retained. The composition of *Height I.E.8* is reminiscent of 'stage one' of *Ticket*; the whole canvas has been devoted to a linear geometric shell. Sketchy Klee-like line and chalky paint intermittently cover the white surface. Even though the composition has been drastically simplified, the artist has retained his love of exuberance and spontaneity; for instance, both line and colour are uneven and broken.

While the complexity of works like *Ticket* may have inspired a number of different approaches, as he continued to simplify his compositions during 1978-79 his technique and handling of paint changed suddenly, severing any obvious consistent progression. In *Home James* (1978/79), for example, his arrangement of the image is free and energetic, but his paint has become confined to tight, defined zones with a flat smooth finish. An abstract portrayal of the artist and his daughter cycling through Christchurch, *Home James* is visually diverse from many of the works produced during the late 1970s. *Home James* recalls Trusttun's treatment of form in *Front Wheel* (1976), where his interest in Miró and the minimal has produced a white canvas only partially interrupted by unusual richly coloured, elongated, linear images.

These connections to the past indicate that rather than completely altering his direction during 1978 and 79 he had merely wanted to briefly try something different.

In early 1979, however, Trusttun's development originally inspired by his 'Banners' series of 1976 was dramatically cut short. While in 1972 it had been a loss of faith that compelled him to put down his brush and turn to the 'Constructions', in 1979 it was illness that prevented him from painting. As a result, when he was able, he began to devote his time to drawing.

To the 'hunter of connections' this may appear to be a logical development from 1978, as drawing alone emphasised line and reduced detail even further. Trusttun, however, had no aesthetic reasons for changing to pencil and pen; practical necessity prompted this shift. His large unstretched canvas paintings required too much energy to create. Unable to walk for two months⁴⁶ following his illness, it was unlikely that Trusttun would be working with an expansive canvas and masses of paint in 1979. Drawing enabled him to think about art, to keep in touch with art without it overpowering him.

Despite taking him nine months to fully recover from his illness Trusttun continued to exhibit his work. In June of 1979 five of his paintings were included in a group show at the New Vision Gallery with Gopas and Philip Clairmont. Then in September he exhibited a recent collection of drawings at the Brooke/Gifford and more works on paper in November at the Bosshard Galleries in Dunedin.

The Brooke/Gifford drawings consisted of 'doodled derivations' from the artist's life; household bills, applications to the Arts Council, receipts, etc. Michael Thomas described these felt pen and pencil works as having the appearance of 'doodles' that were 'produced while the artist was thinking about something else'.⁴⁷ In the Bosshard Galleries' exhibition Trusttun concentrated on faces, using 'minimal marks of black paint on vast expanses of pale brown wrapping paper'.⁴⁸ The reviewer of the exhibition, Peter Leech, regarded these works as marking the beginning of a new development in Trusttun's art. One that displayed an 'increasing craving for artistic simplicity and a taming of earlier aggression'.⁴⁹

Although Leech also claims that the artist's drawings were 'peripheral to Trusttun's main painterly endeavours',⁵⁰ during 1979 and 1980 the artist devoted a large percentage of his time to drawing, and even his paintings were to take on the economy of his drawing style.

While he might have been searching for greater simplicity, this was part of an over all search for a different approach to painting. During 1979 the artist had again experienced a loss of confidence in his ability as a painter and it was to take him a number of years to restore it. In 1991 Trusttun explained that:

It was only when I arrived in Waimate (1986) that I really started painting again. Between that time a lot of work was conceptual; still related to my painting but not full bore.⁵¹

This loss of confidence created more uncertainties for Trusttun. Disillusionment had led him in a number of different stylistic directions since 1972, some more personal than others. After witnessing a strong individual

development from the 'Banners' of 1976 to early 1979, there was a sense that Trusttun had 'matured' as an artist. Even before his illness, however, Trusttun had no intention of remaining with one style. He still regarded himself as a 'growing' artist who had not yet discovered his full potential. In 1977 Lee Trusttun described her husband at thirty-six as a 'young painter':

He anticipates at least another thirty-six years of painting ahead. Therefore, he regards himself as a student - not only of painting, but also of life. Later will come, with luck, a period of maturity when a purely personal style should emerge. To specialise and refine at this stage would be dangerous, leading maybe to painting oneself - feeding off oneself. ⁵²

The dominant and most consistent characteristic of Trusttun's art from 1972 until 1979 was change. As far as Trusttun was concerned there were no rules in art, only freedom; freedom to develop along any path, at any time, and not to be restricted by subject matter, genre, materials, environment, or critical expectations.

After eight years of continual re-organisation and renewal, it soon became evident to critics that change was becoming one of the more permanent characteristics of Trusttun's development and style.

By the end of 1979, having become increasingly disillusioned with his art, there was a definite sense that change was going to continue to dominate his work throughout the 1980s. Even before the opening of the new decade, Trusttun was already searching for an entirely new beginning.

ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER THREE

1. Jean-Clarence Lambert, *Karel Appel: Works on Paper* (New York, 1980), p.93.
2. Edward Lucie-Smith, *Movements in Art Since 1945* (London, 1984), p.119.
3. *ibid.*
4. Michael Dunn, 'Expo. Paintings on Display'. *The Auckland Star*, 17 June 1972.
5. Peter Cape, 'The Arts in Wellington'. *Arts and Community*, vol. 8, no. 6, June 1972, p.12.
6. G. Trevor Moffitt, 'One-man exhibition by Philip Trusttum'. *The Press*, 23 February 1972, p.20.
7. *ibid.*
8. *ibid.*
9. *ibid.*
10. James Ross, Philip Trusttum: A Brief Chronology, National Art Gallery Research Collection, Wellington, c.1974, p.20.
11. *ibid.*, p.21.
12. Brett Riley, 'Philip Trusttum searching for truth'. *The Christchurch Star*, 31 August 1983.
13. James Ross, 'Philip Trusttum's Paintings of the 'Seventies'. *Art New Zealand*, vol. 6, 1977, p.17.
14. Alan Bowness, *Modern European Art* (London, 1972), p.57.
15. *ibid.*, p.58.
16. Gordon H. Brown, 'Philip Trusttum's Visual Vocabulary'. *Philip Trusttum: Selected Works 1962-1979* (Wanganui, 1980), p.10.
17. Hamish Keith, 'Rich, rare rewards in 3-man show'. *The Auckland Star*, October, 1973.
18. G. Trevor Moffitt, 'Recent paintings by Philip Trusttum'. *The Press*, 13 September 1973.
19. Michael Dunn, 'Trip that's shock treatment'. *The Sunday Herald*, 28 October 1973.
20. *ibid.*
21. Hans L. Jaffe, *Klee: Twentieth-Century Masters* (New York, 1972), p.32.
22. See n. 13, p.18.

23. See n. 19.
24. T. L. R[odney] W[ilson], 'Trusttum in transition'. *The Press*, 10 April 1975.
25. Philip Trusttum, reply to letter from H. J. Taylor, 29 April 1991.
26. Florian Rodari, *Collage: pasted, cut and torn papers* (New York, 1988), p.81.
27. *ibid.*, p.112.
28. John Russell, *The World of Matisse 1869-1954* (Nederland, 1977), p.172.
29. See n. 26, p.111.
30. T. J. McNamara, 'Painting with cut paper'. *The New Zealand Herald*, 25 November 1976.
31. *Philip Trusttum: Banners 1976*. (information sheet), Bosshard Galleries, Dunedin, 1 March 1976.
32. Lawrence Alloway, *American Pop Art* (London, 1974), p.66.
33. See n. 30.
34. Derek Schulz, 'The Paintings of Philip Trusttum'. *Art New Zealand*, vol. 20, 1981, p.29.
35. *Philip Trusttum: Solo Exhibition*. (information sheet), Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North, c.1984.
36. Leone Stewart, 'Open house at No.34 Berry Street'. *The Press*, 12 February 1977, p.8.
37. See n. 35.
38. T. L. Rodney Wilson, 'Redoubled Force'. *New Zealand Listener*, 29 July 1978, p.28.
39. Michael Thomas, 'Exhibitions revitalise Ch.ch. art scene'. *The Press*, 1 June 1978, p.12.
40. T. L. Rodney Wilson, 'Philip Trusttum: recent paintings and early works'. *Art New Zealand*, vol. 10, 1978, p.25.
41. See n. 39.
42. T. L. Rodney Wilson, 'Redoubled Force'. *New Zealand Listener*, 29 July 1978, p.28.
43. *ibid.*
44. See n. 25.
45. Peter Leech, 'Painter litter and literacy'. *The Otago Daily Times*, 14 July 1980.
46. See n. 25.
47. Michael Thomas, 'Doodled derivations from an artist's life'. *The Press*, 21 September 1979.

48. Peter Leech, 'Sophistication of artistic simplicity'. *The Otago Daily Times*, 19 November 1979.
49. *ibid.*
50. *ibid.*
51. See n. 25.
52. See n. 13, p.20.

CHAPTER FOUR

NEW BEGINNINGS 1980 - 1986.

'The crater of the volcano gets rid of the flowers that artistically overgrew it' ¹

(Baudelaire on Delacroix)

As the 1980s began Trusttun experienced a strong desire to start afresh; to free himself from the sophistication and knowledge he had accumulated over the past twenty years. In order to find new inspiration and a new starting point, Trusttun embarked on a process of re-assessment and re-organization. This process involved an auction of his work at the C.S.A. Gallery in Christchurch in May of 1980, and a major touring retrospective exhibition scheduled to open in October of that year.

Prior to the auction, plans were already made for an exhibition entitled *Philip Trusttun, Selected Works, 1962-1979*. Arranged by the Sarjeant Gallery of Wanganui and funded by the Queen Elizabeth Arts Council, this exhibition included over forty-two works and was accompanied by a forty page catalogue containing essays by Gordon H. Brown and Peter Leech.

Selected Works toured nationally throughout 1981 and 1982, and was received favourably by the critics. Gary Butler described Trusttun as: 'One of the most dynamic of a new generation of New Zealand painters' (1980)² T.J. McNamara considered that the artist was: 'One of the most individual and exciting painters in New Zealand, and our finest colourist'. (1981)³ And David

Brokenshire announced that: 'This exhibition is one of the most important to tour New Zealand and should not be missed by anyone who is moved by colour'. (1982)⁴

Selected Works provided Trusttun with immense public exposure, and sparked a nation-wide renewal of interest in his paintings.

Having co-curated the exhibition with Bill Milbank, Trusttun was given an excellent opportunity to 'reflect on his work',⁵ reviewing what he had achieved since his art school days. After re-assessing his past the artist was eager to re-organise his present. While assisting with the exhibition Trusttun stayed at Raetihi in the 'painting-less home of a relative'.⁶ A striking contrast to his own environment: 'a house packed to the rafters' with almost twenty years of art. Trusttun found the 'blank walls so refreshing, even stimulating, as he mentally devised new forms to fill the void'.⁷ On his return to Christchurch, this experience provided the incentive to empty his home of an accumulation of work in the hope of discovering a new creative stimulus.

Partially as a reaction to disillusionment and the need to find an entirely new starting point, Trusttun decided to 'dispose of his works', and thought that an auction would be the 'best way to do it'.⁸ In May the artist hired the largest exhibition space at the C.S.A., the Mair Gallery, and filled it with a collection dating back to 1960. Operated jointly by Mr. R. Brown of Robert Brown Real Estate Ltd., and Mr. D. Rankin of H. G. Livingstone Ltd.,⁹ the works hung for two weeks before the auction. The gallery looked as if it had been 'wall papered with paintings',¹⁰ prompting John Coley to observe that: 'There is a touch of Cinderella about the collection, for Trusttun is not one to give his

lively paintings a fine set of frames or mountings to complement their good looks'.¹¹

'Fears that the enterprise might founder' soon vanished as the two-hundred and fifty collectors at the auction kept bidding. By the end of the auction one-hundred and five paintings, drawings and collages were sold, reaching an overall total of \$17,000.¹² The highest price of the day was \$1300 for *Miserly Emperor*, an oil painting from 1969. The lowest price was \$90.

With bare walls, and room to move about both physically and mentally, the auction ultimately proved to be a 'cleansing process with a promise of a new beginning',¹³ without his previous work to disrupt his progress. By May 1980, Trusttum had already started to explore a number of possible avenues. Alternating between drawings and collage, the artist began to concentrate on familiar objects at close range, hiding neither the original source of inspiration, nor his method of working.

During the same period as the auction, Trusttum exhibited a group of works entitled 'Totems'. This exhibition comprised a series of 'throw-aways': tooth-paste, biscuit, tea, cocoa, and cigarette packets. Although it marked a renewal of his interest in the 'found object' and three-dimensional materials, Trusttum had discovered another way of treating these forms. His manner of approach was to carefully unfold the cartons, packets and wrappers, colour each one, and cut it into fragments, rearrange these pieces and then place them together in an entirely new format. He would elaborate upon these designs with feltpen drawn additions. Finally, each object would be meticulously mounted on a piece of brown particle board.

Trusttun also arranged his objects in a manner resembling how he had originally found them. In an installation format, the artist labelled one gallery wall at the Brooke/Gifford, 'Well run-over objects on given streets'. The 'numerous squashed beer cans, cigarette packets, broken glass, matchboxes, rubber bands, and broken shoe laces' that had been collected by Trusttun while out cycling were 'spaced and fixed in rows on the gallery wall'.¹⁴ According to a dictionary definition, a 'totem' is an object, animal, plant, etcetera, symbolizing a clan, family, etcetera.¹⁵ The familiar objects that Trusttun had gathered, altered, and displayed therefore, is the artist's personal representation of a 'throw-away' society.

While John Coley thought that the 'sparkling inventions' should have been called 'Variations on the theme of the cardboard packet',¹⁶ David Brokenshire observed that if Trusttun's 'throwaways' are to be 'seen as 'badges' of our time, this show is a bitter comment on our civilisation, our time, ourselves'.¹⁷

After 'Totems', Trusttun returned to drawing and devoted the remainder of 1980 to an extensive series inspired by the motor vehicle (pl. 19). There was no symbolic reason for this choice of subject matter, only that he 'likes cars', and that they are always 'physically smack in front of him as part of his life'.¹⁸ Every weekday morning over a six month period the artist occupied a corner of a mechanic's workshop at 'CARS Ltd.' in Christchurch, and proceeded to work on large brush drawings of motor vehicles. Working with black ink, or acrylic paint, on cut-up rolls of heavy brown paper and white paper, the closest thing he could identify his technique with was 'doodling'. Concentrating on sections of cars, or on particular details, such as head-lights, radiators, grills, hub-caps,

tyres and bumpers, the artist's drawings examined motor vehicles at close range. Trusttun's treatment of these fragments alternated between an open, linear, sketchy style and a solid, more 'heavily modelled' approach with stronger contrasts.

From 1980 until 1984 Trusttun returned constantly to this 'Cars' series. Although by Christmas of 1983 he had completed almost four hundred drawings, he claimed that he still had not reached the end; 'I haven't made a whole car'.¹⁹ These drawings were exhibited at the New Vision Gallery, and the Bosshard Galleries in 1981. Trusttun showed a further selection from this 'series' during 1984, at the Robert McDougall Gallery in Christchurch where one-hundred and fifty drawings occupied the gallery's centre court.

Trusttun concentrated on cars for an extensive period, using only black ink and paper. 'I did it as an exercise to get back to looking again. I wanted to get closer, closer, closer'.²⁰ Inspired by the 'doodles and drawings' of his children; the artist wanted to capture that same raw spontaneity of a child's vision. Trusttun believed that: 'to do better art than kids you have to be a genius. Their work is a clear, creative, unhampered flow. The trouble is we end up knowing too much'.²¹

From art school until 1979 Trusttun had grown as an artist by listening to Gopas's advice, and from observing the leaders of modern art. By 1980 however, Trusttun had sought a new source of inspiration.

In 1983 Brett Riley of the Christchurch Star observed that most of Trusttun's work since the 1979 cut-off point for *Philip Trusttun: Selected Works*,

revealed that the artist was 'trying desperately to shed the acquired conventions of painting - those conventions which stifle and distort and bore'.²² Struggling with the 'fundamentals of art', Trusttum wanted to paint without rules, mixing styles, techniques and materials. He wanted ultimately to present his subject matter with a 'child-like honesty and insight', to create an image 'unrendered, unskilled, unclever, untechnical'.²³ In order to achieve his goal he had to learn to see and paint 'all over again'.

Over the next five years his art became involved in a process of rapid change and regeneration, as he searched for an 'unhampered' development. Moving from one idea to another, like a child with a selection of new toys to play with, Trusttum began to see and portray everyday objects with a new intensity and insight. Concentrating particularly on his hobbies and his family and friends, he believed that 'all an artist does, is look harder'.²⁴

During 1981 and 1982 Trusttum devoted his creative energy to a close examination of the game of tennis. Aside from a few sketches of the sport from 1980, this was the artist's 'first significant attempt' to 'make work about his main sporting interest'.²⁵ Exhibited in 1982 as *Play*, *Play II*, and *Play III*, this series concentrated not only the items associated with the game, but also captured a sense of the action and energy involved in tennis.

Initially inspired by the process he used in his 'Totems' and 'Cars' series, that of breaking down a recognisable image and rearranging the pieces to create something new, the tennis paintings marked a return to paint and colour and the beginning of his fascination with large scale collage cut-outs.

With the 'Play' paintings Trusttum got closer to his subject matter than ever before. Focusing on the smallest details, either his shoe laces or the racket handle; the artist would magnify these familiar objects until the image became unrecognisable. He then cut up these paintings into a variety of shapes and arranged them in a new format. In *No. 1 Puma* (1982), for example, rather than depicting a large shoe or lace, the artist captures the fine weave of the fabric, the open stitching of the laces and the bold tread of the soles. Magnified and dismembered, the Puma shoe is transformed into a striking network of line, pattern and colour.

Observing each object more carefully, Trusttum discovers those things that are normally ignored by the human eye. The artist purposely sought out the obscure, mundane images which are either hidden or not considered worthy of attention. The herring-bone weave of his socks, the lines on the tennis court, manufacturers' marks and labels, all became the focus of his concentration. Displayed in collages of up to three meters high, he gave these 'mundane' forms a vibrant and powerful new life.

The composition of *L-24 1/4"* (1981-82) (pl. 20) balances the fragmented handle of the tennis racket between two sports shoes. Across the handle in glowing yellow paint on a black background, are the manufacturers' symbols L-24 1/4". The hidden and the insignificant have become the centre of attention.

Rather than just observe the game of tennis through his paintings Trusttum invites the spectator to become involved in the action. With titles like *Slice* (1982), *Impact* (1981), *Drive* (1981-82) and *Turn* (1981-82), the artist focuses on those moments that are generally lost in the accelerated activity of playing.

Within Trusttun's broken, faceted and energetic compositions, the viewer can only capture glimpses of the objects involved. Racket and ball, net and court are shattered into numerous peices, creating a similar visual experience to that a player sees when immersed in the activity of play.

In *Turn*, for example, 'the asphalt and painted lines of a tennis court are fragmented and set spinning around a tennis ball'.²⁶ With *Impact* the viewer can almost feel the force of the ball as the tennis racket shudders from the impact and splinters into shards encircling an already evaporating impression of a tennis ball as it disappears from sight.

In April of 1982, Trusttun was invited to represent New Zealand at the Sydney Biennale in Australia. This 'art jamboree, miniature Olympics of aesthetics',²⁷ brought together the works of two-hundred and seven artists from seventeen different countries, including Britain, France, Germany and the United States. Seven other New Zealand artists participated. Exhibiting alongside Trusttun were Billy Apple, Ron Brownson, Christine Hellyar, Richard Killeen, Anna Lockwood, Peter Peryer and Boyd Webb. Collectively, the New Zealanders contributed twenty-one works.

Trusttun exhibited three works from his 'Play' series at the Biennale. As Avenal McKinnon explains, the artist had 'moved beyond traditional easel painting into an open form of cut-out shapes super-imposed upon one another in frameless collages'.²⁸ Trusttun's presentation of the 'Play' paintings brought to the attention of critics the technical similarities between Trusttun and Richard Killeen. Trusttun's 'Play' style also linked him to the Cubists, Futurists and Matisse. It is possible that these artists may have influenced

Trusttum; the collage, the fragmented surface, the multiplicity of view-points, and the representation of movement are all characteristics of Cubism or Futurism, the coloured cut-out paper is reminiscent of Matisse, and the frameless pieces pinned directly to the gallery wall provide connections to Killeen.

Visually, however, the final impression of Trusttum's work was entirely different. For example the Cubists used real objects and paint to construct their faceted compositions. Through a complex interplay of line, light and dark paint on canvas they created an illusion of a shattered surface with many viewpoints. Trusttum has painted only one viewpoint, and then cut it into pieces. The fragmentation came after the exercise of painting, not during. He used only paper and paint. No 'real' objects were involved.

His 'Play' paintings were also different in a number of ways from Killeen's. Painted on goatskin paper with Rowney's powder paint, Trusttum's colourful cut-outs were assembled in a pre-determined arrangement, with each fragment dependent on the other. Killeen's metal shapes were to be hung in any order, each piece was 'separate and designed to be placed on the wall individually'.²⁹ Trusttum's *L-24 1/4"*, for example, comes with ten pages of step-by-step 'hanging instructions'. Every piece is numbered and, like a jigsaw, can only be put together in one way.

With his tennis paintings Trusttum combined freedom and invention with discipline. In order to achieve the experience of spontaneity, he had to set his own rules. A pre-determined arrangement of the pieces ensured that the works would always appear as lively and energetic as the game of tennis itself.

With the 'Play' series Trusttun was moving towards a more individual and closely focused interpretation of everyday life. He was seeing and portraying the mundane with a new wonder and excitement. Yet even though 'Play' appears free and spontaneous, by the end of 1982 Trusttun was beginning to find the working process too technical and controlled. He wanted the apparent freedom of play without the rules.

This dissatisfaction again prompted him to change his direction, to continue his search for an 'unhampered art'. Along the way, however, he briefly experimented with a spin-off from his frameless collages. Inspired by some 'North African jewellery a friend had brought back from the war',³⁰ the artist began to pin thousands of tiny pieces of coloured French canson paper to the walls, ceilings and the stairwell of his home. Brett Riley observed that the swirling, sparkling jewellery inspired installation covered the walls with a 'playful abandon'.³¹

By 1983, however, Trusttun had become bored with cutting up coloured paper. Ideally, what he sought was both a working process and visual result that was open, honest, unsophisticated and enjoyable. On reflection Trusttun decided that Gopas had been wrong when he declared that 'nature' was the only 'renewable' source of inspiration. From his own personal experience the artist decided that children were also, with their activities and thoughts and their general approach to life. While children became his major creative stimulus for the next three years, Trusttun's energy was to centre around the human figure, and human activities and interests. 'Matisse', Trusttun said, 'never had to leave the human figure for his entire long and prolific life'.³²

With a renewed enthusiasm Trusttum began to paint his family and close friends again. Although his 1983 and 1984 works have been called 'portraits', Trusttum has avoided the conventional approach to portraiture. To begin with, he does not paint the face of his subject, a personal likeness is not important. The main purpose of each work is to tell more about the person than what he or she looks like. Using only the outline of his subject, he identified each individual by surrounding or covering the figure with personal belongings. The artist also avoided the traditional materials of stretched canvas and oils. Instead he used a rich variety of media, acrylics, paper and fabric affixed to the unstretched canvas with pins or glue.

Nothing of his working process was hidden. Concentrating only on people who were close to him, Trusttum would first get his subject to lie down on unrolled, untouched canvas. He would then trace the body outline and either leave the direct image on the canvas, or cut it out, chop it to pieces and transfer these pieces to another sheet. For Trusttum the outline was 'one way of alleviating' his anxiety of starting a new work. 'When I find I've got that down, the outline, I can relax. I don't have to use the outline or anything. I've got a mark on the canvas'.³³

Working in this manner during 1983 and 1984, Trusttum was to alternate between the sparse surface and the cluttered canvas. In *Dreaming* (1983) (pl. 21), for example, the artist depicts his daughter Hannah dreaming about her favourite subject, horses. Trusttum transmits this information to the viewer with a minimum of detail. The composition consists of two roughly drawn outlines. One image is of his daughter lying on her back with her hands

behind her head, the other portrays Hannah lying on her stomach, her head resting on her arms. Above her and across her face, Trusttun has placed cut-out and stenciled images of running horses. Aside from the figure outline and the horses, the rest of the canvas has been left empty. The artist has also limited his colours to brief passages of red, yellow, brown and blue.

Viola (1983), a painting based on Trusttun's son Martin, is more involved. The artist has portrayed his son as a multi-headed, multi-limbed form. The original outline has been repeated, cut out, fragmented and loosely pasted to another sheet of canvas. The whole surface is covered with a web of colour. The body is painted in brisk dashes of yellow, red, blue and black; each colour confined to a defined space. The heads are filled in with a dense red paint, broken only by the word 'M.o.z.a.r.t.' forming the eyes and what appear to be the letters 'S.O.N.A' forming the four mouths.

In this frenzied portrayal of Martin and his viola, Trusttun has made no attempt to present order or control, the work is active and free. The artist has hidden nothing of the working process from the viewer. Brett Riley declares that these paintings are 'not tidy, cleaned up, stretched, glazed, finished or framed. There is nothing precious about them'.³⁴ They are raw and spontaneous, almost child-like in their execution and appearance. 'I don't believe in framing', Trusttun explains 'I prefer them hanging loose -they're sort of messier and appeal to me'.³⁵

Trusttun's love of process and disorder, of cutting out, and reassembling pieces randomly with frayed edges, sticky paint, hand and boot prints, was also inspired by his wife's activities as a dress-maker and fabric designer. By

watching Lee with clothes patterns, fabrics, pins and threads, Trusttum continued to gather ideas for his 'portrait' series. As 1983 progressed, the artist's paintings concentrated more on the clothing of his subject. Cut-out imitations of garments resembling the clothes of a child's paper doll would be 'discarded' across the canvas, overlapping one another.

In *4:15* (1983) (pl. 22), the artist records the activities of his daughter at a specific time of the day. Hannah's figure is surrounded by cut-out fabric and painted canvas imitations of clothing relating to her after-school interests. The work records her arriving home from school in her uniform and preparing to change into her horse-riding gear. The composition is again open and freely arranged. Trusttum found that clothes could describe his subject better than their facial features alone.

Into 1984 clothing continued to carry all the information about the subject. With *Lee* (1984), his wife's interest in fashion and fabric is recorded. This time the artist includes scraps of the actual fabric his wife has worked with. Lee's 'figure' has been 'dressed' with a selection of dyed silk pieces, and open pages of a fashion magazine are used to describe her face. Each item is affixed loosely to the canvas by pins, and, aside from the direct figure outline, the remainder of the surface is untouched.

Bill Milbank observed that, as this group of works developed, Trusttum's 'interest in expressing time, process, and layers of experience relating to the subject increased'.³⁶ This resulted in the artist's creation of the multi-layered painting *Book of Dreams* (1984) (pl. 23). Inspired by his daughter Hannah, the painting examines a process of change. Through a number of layers, Hannah

is transformed from a schoolgirl into a horse and rider. The artist achieves this transformation by incorporating a number of different views within the one work. The first view consists of the schoolgirl in her uniform, with rosettes and ribbons for her face and hands. This view is divided into three zones by two bright red velcro-strip dashes running horizontally through the centre of the canvas. Velcro also runs across the top and down each side of the work. The purpose of the velcro dashes is to enable Trusttun to affix temporary layers across the original image, and transform the schoolgirl, step-by-step, into a 'multi-legged rampaging horse approaching the jumps'.³⁷

Book of Dreams is a complex work. Pages of canvas gradually cover the school uniform replacing it with a riding jacket. Then the 'legs' of a horse appear in the lower section and a 'riding helmet' in the top. Surrounding one pair of 'legs' are more red velcro strips to which Trusttun fixes six extra 'equine limbs'. The final image consists of a semi-abstract tangle of layers and views. Hannah has become part horse and part rider. With the *Book of Dreams*, the artist has turned a normal daily procedure into something mysterious. The majority of the work remains hidden from the spectator, it can only be viewed in its entirety during a process of removing the canvas 'pages'.

Trusttun's discovery of the velcro strip enabled him to turn one painting into several paintings. As he explained:

Once you start sticking things down, then you just get the picture as it is and that's all. With velcro I can get a wide range with one painting - making it three dimensional.³⁸

The various layers he produced allowed the viewer to participate in the process of creation, to watch the work develop freely before their eyes as the 'pages' are removed. The velcro and layered surface provided Trusttun with the 'unfinished' and 'unsophisticated' look he was searching for: 'Things start falling off the work, curving it at the ends and it adds to the rough effect which I like'.³⁹

Trusttun exhibited his collage portraits at the Bosshard Galleries in Dunedin, and at the C.S.A Gallery, Christchurch during March of 1984. The exhibition at the Bosshard was entitled 'Backhanded Portraits 1983/84'; the four works on display were *Tim II* (1983), *Tim III* (1983), *Lee's Table* (1983), and *Lee's Uniform* (1984), and the prices for these portraits ranged from \$3,500 to \$4,500.

Bridie Lonie reviewed the exhibition and found that although Trusttun's paintings had an appearance of 'rawness' and 'impermanency', the close examination of people and personalities made for a 'thought provoking exhibition'.⁴⁰ When displayed at the C.S.A., however, John Hurrell considered Trusttun's exhibition to be 'not so successful in its impact as other shows by the artist'.⁴¹ Again Trusttun exhibited four works, two based on Lee's activities, the other two entitled *753"* and *Martin Walking*. Hurrell described the portraits of Lee as 'cluttered and bogged down with their forms', materials 'appearing clumsily positioned'.⁴² Ironically, though these comments were intended as criticism, for an artist primarily seeking an unskilled disordered style, Hurrell's description of the works could be taken as praise. By calling Trusttun's technique clumsy, Hurrell unintentionally revealed that Trusttun was developing along his intended path.

Hurrell ends the review on a more positive note. Referring to the other portraits on display he calls them 'more whimsical' and 'more carefully planned': 'They provide the exuberance and inventive wit for which their creator is so deservedly known. For them this show is essential viewing'.⁴³

Trusttum exhibited his collage 'portraits' of 1983 and 1984 not only in New Zealand, but also in Scotland and the United States. The *Book of Dreams* was shown in the ANZART exhibition at the Edinburgh International Festival in 1984. A diverse group of work was chosen by Wystan Curnow to represent New Zealand, including examples by Colin McCahon, Andrew Drummond, Richard Killeen and Maria Olsen. Michael Spens compared New Zealand's contribution to Australia's and found that: 'in contrast to the Australian rooms with their measured coolness, the New Zealand work exhibited a playful individualism, aloft between anarchy and self-fulfilment, redolent with expressionism'.⁴⁴

Trusttum had left New Zealand in July to participate in hanging his four paintings at Edinburgh. Michael Spens reported that, Trusttum's 'work made a considerable impression upon the festival-going public'.⁴⁵ Displayed during August at the Edinburgh festival, the ANZART exhibition also showed in Ireland and Australia.

During 1984 Trusttum was also invited to exhibit at the Kornblee Gallery in New York. Trusttum's solo exhibition 'came about after an American entrepreneur Mary Evangelista' ⁴⁶ arrived in New Zealand. Although she

only went to Auckland, Evangelista talked to many artists and was given a general impression of New Zealand's artistic condition.

Prior to the Edinburgh Festival, Trusttun had already sent a total of twenty-one works to the Kornblee Gallery. He described these paintings as a 'combination of styles', all from the 'last couple of years'.⁴⁷ Expecting only 'nine or ten' works to be exhibited, Trusttun's American debut was well received by Grace Glueck, a reviewer for the *New York Times*: 'Philip Trusttun celebrates his family's doings in big folksy collages that cleverly combine drawing and painting with cloth cut-outs. A strong, free hand with paint and patterning gives [his] work a manic vitality'.⁴⁸

Before leaving Christchurch Trusttun had commented that it was time New Zealand artists got their work to New York, the 'arts centre of the world', to 'let people know things are happening here': 'I really think we have something to offer. New Zealand art, as a whole would beat somewhere like England hands down'.⁴⁹

Trusttun was aware that 1984 was a favourable time for New Zealanders to make their artistic debut because a major exhibition of Maori art, *Te Maori*, was scheduled to open at the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art in New York in September of that year. 'Hopefully it will have put our country in people's minds before I get there'.⁵⁰

At the beginning of 1985 Trusttun was to exhibit again in New York, in a group exhibition alongside contemporary New Zealand artists like Gretchen

Albrecht, Stephen Banbury, Richard Killeen and James Ross. Held at the 22 Wooster Street Gallery, the exhibition was called 'N.Z.N.Y'.

Back in New Zealand Trusttun continued to exhibit his 'Portraits'. John Hurrell was becoming more supportive of Trusttun's endeavours and declared that Trusttun's exhibition at the C.S.A 'may be the best show from a painter we are likely to see in Christchurch this year'. He also observed that:

Outside of their visual appeal and sprawling exuberance, these works have levels of meaning that oscillate between the personal and the sociological. They have a multi-layered semantic richness that is unusual for Trusttun, and which has not often been present in his past imagery from sporting or domestic settings.⁵¹

When reviewing the Bosshard Gallery's exhibition of Trusttun paintings, Peter Leech however, found it difficult to accept the artist's temporary departure from the 'customary Trusttun spectrum'. 'The exuberance and whimsy of Trusttun's usual work is severely depressed by the chromatic weight of vast areas of unmodulated dull-green canvas'.⁵²

While Leech was generally in favour of Trusttun's diversity, Rob Taylor, an art critic for *Salient*, was not. An admirer of Trusttun's 'in the late '60s and early '70s', Taylor considered the artist's latest experiment with the two-dimensional disappointing. When he recalled Trusttun's contribution to the Edinburgh Festival in 1984, Taylor complained that:

He is one of those who has been allowed to indulge in a mythic 'Midas touch'. All he touches turns to art. The works have a throw-away quality. And really they should be treated accordingly.⁵³

Although intended as criticism, Taylor's comment effectively reveals that despite Trusttun's diversity, his position in New Zealand art was more than secure: a position earned by daring to be experimental.

During 1985 Trusttun continued to develop his large collage 'Portraits'. A significant work from this period is a series based on his wife Lee entitled *Woman, From My View* (1985) (pl. 24). Consisting of eight separate panels, Bill Milbank described the series as, 'Philip's celebration of his relationship with his wife Lee, the things she uses in their daily life, her support of his art, their physical relationship and their personal activities'.⁵⁴

Trusttun adopted the same approach to this series of works as he did for 'Backhanded Portraits', with the figure outline and related paraphernalia. The *Woman, from My View* series begins and ends with a simple uncluttered outline. One is completely filled in with dark blue paint, another has been covered with dots and patterns. The remaining six images are colourful and each one concentrates on a new activity using a different pose from the artist's subject.

Three examples from *Woman, From My View* capture Lee as a partner, a mother and wife, and as a fabric designer. In one panel Lee's outline is surrounded by miniature replicas of her husband's 'Backhanded Portraits'. Across the upper-half of her torso he has signed his name; a bright red smiling face fills the outline of her hair, and the rest of her body is covered with designs that refer to her own artistic activities. The purpose of this panel is to reveal how marriage can also be a supportive working partnership.

The second example is devoted to Lee the dressmaker. Across her figure outline lies a network of objects. Imitations of fashion cut-outs, scissors, measuring tapes, cotton reels, irons and coat-hangers move unevenly across the canvas. This work appears to represent Lee's own artistic and working independence.

In the third view Trusttun concentrates on the New Zealand mother and wife (pl. 24). He has 'dressed' Lee's upper torso and arms with a Maori design. The rest of her figure is covered and surrounded by painted articles relating to her role as a care-giver: hot-water bottles, coldrex packets, Dettol, bandaid, scissors and bandages. Although Trusttun's subject is someone whom he knows personally, each view he has depicted from Lee's private life can also represent women in general. His message is simple, visual and universal, it is a two-dimensional 'celebration' of a woman's day-to-day life.

While still concentrating on family activities, Trusttun enlarged his range of materials and worked in a frameless open format. Two works from 1985 that capture this shift in his development are *Martin's Sewings No.1* and *Slightly Altered* (pl. 25). *Martin's Sewings No.1* is a collection of works relating to his son's fashion design. *Slightly Altered* is based on his own, and his daughter's, interest in show-jumping. With each work Trusttun takes a different approach to his subject matter.

Martin's Sewings No.1 and *Slightly Altered* were included in a major group exhibition of contemporary New Zealand art at the end of 1986 and the beginning of 1987. Luit Bieringa explains that the National Art Gallery's

Content/Context: A Survey of Recent New Zealand Art was its 'response to a need expressed by many involved in the arts for a more substantial coverage of contemporary New Zealand art'. It was also the result of a 'desire to explore more critically the nature and diversity of many of the concerns within the visual arts'.⁵⁵

In the catalogue accompanying the exhibition Trusttun's 'current' artistic development was described as, 'moving from the painted surface through his wife Lee's textile cutting table to shaped collages, layered and pinned constructions which combine the real and replicated'.⁵⁶

What the artist was effectively doing at this stage was combining a number of his discoveries from the past five years. *Martin's Sewings No. 1* for example, combines aspects of his 'Totems' and 'Backhanded Portrait' series. Its presentation is similar to that of his *Book of Dreams* *Martin's Sewings No.1* is book-like in its format; as each 'page' is opened Martin's day is revealed. On one 'page' Trusttun has painted Martin's time table. Across the canvas he has written 'Your Working Day'. A large circle has been broken into segments to represent his day and labeled 'Machine Time', 'Wasted Time', and 'Handling Time'. The other 'pages' contain pattern layouts and cut-outs, and at the very back of the book there is a pocket with material scraps stuffed into it.

In *Martin's Sewings No.1* Trusttun uses only acrylic on canvas. He has, however, painted the canvas to resemble fabric pieces by emphasising the weave and texture of the cloth and the cotton stitching around the edges. In another example from this series he uses real fabric. Patchworks and silks overflow the boundaries of his multi-layered constructions, marking a

temporary return to working with mixed media. Whether he was using the real or an imitation, Trusttun had gathered together a collection of images or 'Totems' symbolic of his son's daily activities.

With *Slightly Altered* the artist combines qualities from his 'Backhanded Portrait' and his 'Play' series. While Trusttun has drawn the outline of a horse and rider, rather than leaving it on the canvas, he has cut it out and divided it into separate pieces. These pieces are then coloured and reassembled directly onto the gallery wall. *Slightly Altered* differs from his 'Play' and 'Portraits' works in that there are no objects covering the shape to identify it. Each fragment is not filled with magnified imitations of riding clothes or horse hair instead he has filled these cut-out shapes with geometric patches of colour, stencils and words. These words have a primarily decorative function, but they can be read if the viewer perseveres.

The layout of the work is irregular. Some sentences are written upside down, vertically and diagonally. Some words are divided where there are no natural breaks, blending into one another in a confusing chain of letters. However, when examined closely they provide information relating to the subject matter. For example, in the upper left-hand fragment Trusttun has written 'this saddle is designed to be ridden with a short stirrup'.

His hand-written words in black ink cover almost every available space. The writing, the unusual shapes and their arrangement side-by-side, all resemble a cut-out and pieced together clothing pattern, a sight that would be very familiar to Trusttun living with a fashion designer. The final composition and layout is distant from its original source of horse and rider. Trusttun has

taken the subject matter, experimented with it and re-arranged it, hence the title, *Slightly Altered*

Trusttum had entered the 1980s with the intention of starting afresh. He was hoping to break away from expectations and distance himself from his own artistic knowledge. In order to begin again, he embarked on a process of re-organization and rediscovery. The artist primarily wanted to experience the world, and art through the eyes of a child.

As the artist moved through his 'Totems', 'Cars', and 'Play' series, he progressed naturally from one idea to another, each step bringing him closer to his subject and further away from sophisticated outside influences.

With his 'Backhanded Portraits' Trusttum had begun to create his own rules and set his own limits. By the end of 1985 however, it appeared that Trusttum was seeking a compromise between a child and an adult's artistic vision.

Between 1980 and the beginning of 1986 Trusttum had effectively accomplished what he had set out to achieve; to break free from his past and the strong influence of modern European and American art. With his distinctly personal vision of everyday life, and an individual means of presenting this vision, Trusttum had started all over again.

Fortunately, this apparent artistic freedom did not appear to bother or offend critical expectation. It seemed that no matter what Trusttum did it would be approved, even praised. Critics were able to accept his unpredictability largely because they had grown to expect it from the artist, although with each new

development came a promise that Trusttum might be settling down. However, just as soon as commentators had registered his new style, the artist would change yet again. Despite the fact that this change is expected, Trusttum continues to surprise his critics.

ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER FOUR

1. Jean-Clarence Lambert, *Karel Appel: Works on Paper* (New York, 1980), p.51.
2. Larry Finn, 'Major exhibition of Trusttun art'. *The Daily News*, 18 July 1981.
3. *ibid.*
4. David Brokenshire, 'A feast of visual delights'. *The Press*, 3 June 1982, p.11.
5. Bill Milbank, *Philip Trusttun: Selected Works 1962-1979* (Wanganui, 1980), p.3.
6. John Coley, 'Trusttun clears out: 20 years' work crowds C.S.A gallery'. *The Christchurch Star*, 21 May 1980.
7. *ibid.*
8. *ibid.*
9. *Philip Trusttun Exhibition* (invitation), C.S.A Gallery, Christchurch, 13 May 1980.
10. John Coley, 'Philip Trusttun'. *Art New Zealand*, vol. 17, 1980, p.17.
11. See n. 6.
12. See n. 10.
13. Elva Bett, *New Zealand Art: A Modern Perspective* (Auckland, 1986), p.48.
14. David Brokenshire, 'Trusttun on "Totems"'. *The Press*, 19 May 1980, p.12.
15. William T. McLeod (ed.), *The Collins Paperback English Dictionary* (London, 1986), p.915.
16. John Coley, 'Philip Trusttun: Totems'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.16, 1980, p.20.
17. See n. 14.
18. Brett Riley, 'Closer, closer, closer'. *New Zealand Listener*, 21 April 1984, p.37.
19. *ibid.*
20. *ibid.*
21. Hazel Menehira, 'An artist whose colour 'sings''. *The Wanganui Chronicle*, 24 October 1980.
22. Brett Riley, 'Philip Trusttun: searching for truth'. *The Christchurch Star*, 31 August 1983.
23. *ibid.*

24. *ibid.*
25. Bill Milbank, *Trusttut: From Living* (Wanganui, 1991), p.1.
26. Avenal McKinnon, 'A winner in every set'. *The Evening Post*, 4 August 1982.
27. Roger Blackley and Peter Wells, 'The 4th Biennale of Sydney: New Zealanders in Australia'. *Art New Zealand*, vol. 24, 1982, p.29.
28. See n. 26.
29. Gil Docking, *Two Hundred Years of New Zealand Painting* (Wellington, 1971 - enlarged Michael Dunn - Auckland, 1990), p.226.
30. See n. 22.
31. *ibid.*
32. *ibid.*
33. Wystan Curnow, *ANZART 1984* (Wellington, 1984), p.89.
34. See n. 22.
35. Cindy Baxter, 'Philip Trusttut: putting New Zealand on the map'. *The Press*, 4 July 1984, p.20.
36. Bill Milbank, *The Sarjeant's Trusttuts*, (Wanganui, 1991), p.3.
37. *ibid.*
38. See n. 35.
39. *ibid.*
40. Bridle Lonie, 'Art pattern and Process'. *The Otago Daily Times*, March 1984.
41. John Hurrell, 'Philip Trusttut shows'. *The Press*, 14 March 1984, p.37.
42. *ibid.*
43. *ibid.*
44. Michael Spens, 'Meaning Excellence and Purpose: ANZART in Edinburgh'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.33, 1983, p.28.
45. *ibid.*
46. See n. 35.
47. *ibid.*
48. Grace Glueck, 'Philip Trusttut: Kornblee Gallery'. *The New York Times*, 26 October 1984.

49. See n. 35.
50. *ibid.*
51. John Hurrell, 'Trusttun paintings'. *The Press*, 20 August 1985, p.16.
52. Peter Leech, 'Trusttun's Wardrobe: Philip Trusttun at the Bosshard Galleries'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.37, 1985, p.22.
53. Rob Taylor, 'Art Rob Taylor: (Before He Robs You!)'. *Salient*, 1985, p.12.
54. See n. 36.
55. Luit Bieringa, *Content/Context: A Survey of Recent New Zealand Art* (Wellington, 1986), p.9.
56. *ibid.*, p.13.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONTINUING TO SURPRISE 1986 - 1990.

'I really enjoy the complexity and diversity of Trusttun. After about thirty years of looking at his work he can continue to surprise and delight'.¹

(Bronwen Marwick, 1990)

Throughout twenty-six years of artistic development Trusttun's style has changed constantly. Virtually every year brought with it an alternative approach as he continued to extend the boundaries of his art. Between 1986 and 1990 this trend continued. For Trusttun, 1986 was a year of both personal and artistic change. During that time the artist and his family moved to a small farm outside Waimate in South Canterbury. This new environment marked the beginning of a period of adjustment and reorganization.

Bill Milbank explains that: 'Philip spent much of the first year settling both in a living and art sense'.² It was only after he had explored a variety of experimental options that he was able to regain his sense of direction and concentrate on his new surroundings. On observing Trusttun's output over 1986 Graham Reid recalled that: 'for more than two decades he has been involved in a cycle of advance, retreat, then reconsider as he seeks new modes of expression and styles to explore'.³

In retrospect, 1986 marked an interval in his development where the artist paused to reconsider his past and prepare for his future. During this interim phase Trusttun continued with a variation on his collage portraits of 1983-85,

experimented with woodblock printing, and began to work on a design for a major stained glass commission. An eventful year, 1986 displays Trusttum's willingness to investigate practically every two-dimensional medium on any scale.

In June of that year the artist exhibited a collection of enlarged canvas constructions based on articles and objects from his immediate surroundings. Out of canvas and paint he created larger-than-life imitations of basic household items.

While technically there are obvious connections with the Pop artist Claes Oldenburg's work, these large constructions are also a logical development from his 'Backhanded Portrait' series. Trusttum has selected and enlarged such mundane articles as aprons, table cloths, dress-making packages and seed sachets to almost three-dimensional proportions. The artist's intention with these works was not to create exact reproductions of the originals, but to record his personal impression of impersonal mass-produced items. Each work has been constructed and painted entirely by hand.

With *Dimorphotheca* (1986) (pl. 26) for example, Trusttum has assembled in canvas a large seed sachet intended to be viewed from three different angles. On the front of the packet there is a colourful simplified image of a flower, its botanical name, and the brand name of the seeds. On the reverse is a description of the flower and instructions for planting. Inside the packet are the 'seeds'; cut up fragments of old paintings. Trusttum has followed the general layout of his subject matter, but only where it suits him. Executed in free-hand, his treatment is sketchy and spontaneous. Words can be read, but

have been applied in a disorderly manner reminiscent of his use of words in *Slightly Altered* (c.1985-86) (pl. 25).

When these works were exhibited Trusttum also utilised the nature of loose canvas, and produced soft constructions resembling dish cloths, tea towels and glass cloths hung from hooks. In general, critics found this latest adventure with canvas and paint entertaining. The exhibition inspired comments ranging from 'an enjoyable novelty',⁴ and a 'stimulating show',⁵ to an 'exhibition full of delight and unpretentious mastery'.⁶

While enlarging objects from his kitchen and garden, the artist paused to experiment with the traditional medium of woodblock printing. In August 1986 at the Brooke/Gifford Gallery in Christchurch, he exhibited a series of *Colour Woodcuts*. These works display Trusttum's first serious attempt to investigate his new environment and to renew his ties with the twentieth-century leaders of art. The complex technical procedure of woodcuts meant that Trusttum's style became more ordered and defined than before. Human figures and natural objects were reduced to anonymous shapes and patterns as the artist learnt how to control his medium. In a review of Trusttum's exhibition Pat Unger described his work as 'sophisticated and cool'. Although she was impressed by his handling of the woodblock process, she was disappointed in the choice of media: 'Impeccably printed, these rather severe reproductions lack the powerful impact of his painted works'.⁷

As he experimented with print-making and canvas constructions, Trusttum also became involved in planning a design for a major stained glass commission. This exercise was to take the artist even further away from the

unhampered working process he had developed between 1980 and 1985. The medium of stained glass demanded discipline and control, for many rules and conditions could affect the final visual result. The designer must take into account certain parameters, from understanding the specialised technical procedure, to considering the site and scale of the finished piece and its surrounding environment.

In 1986 six artists were invited by the Aurora Group Ltd., to submit ideas for two stories of stained glass on the Unisys Building in Wellington. Trusttun successfully attained the commission. Prior to the Unisys window, Trusttun was already familiar with the medium, having designed and assisted with stained glass projects throughout the early 1980s. In 1981 Trusttun worked with the stained glass specialist Graham Stewart on the design for a window in the North Transept of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, Christchurch. While Stewart was to construct and install the window, he allowed Trusttun to assist him with the project during its completion. Stewart said that:

For the painter to actually work with the glass is unique
- I've tried to make him feel at ease in it, rather than
inhibit him. That's why it is working so well.
Nothing is being lost in my interpretation of his work,
because he is totally involved.⁸

In 1985 Trusttun took part in a touring exhibition of flat-glass by a group of New Zealand painters. For 'Artists in Glass' thirteen panels were designed by seven artists: Philippa Blair, Nigel Brown, Debra Bustin, Patrick Hanly, Ralph Hotere, Claudia Pond Eyley and Trusttun. Glass artists Suzanne Johnson and Ben Hanly conceived the idea for the exhibition in 1983 after

collaborating 'with Trusttun in designing and fabricating flat-glass windows for Christchurch buildings'.⁹

Some of the works involved in the exhibition reflected the artists' painting styles, particularly Nigel Brown whose paintings were already influenced by Cloissonism, a style inspired by painted and fired stained glass. Others had noted that working with flat-glass had 'consciously affected their style and approach'.¹⁰ Like Trusttun, however, utilising the glowing colours and domination of line, the contemporary New Zealand painters' designs were free and abstract, adapting their own ideas to glass rather than being influenced by art-historical precedents, for example, Victorian Ecclesiastical art.

In 1986 Trusttun's partners in the Unisy's commission were Suzanne Johnson and Ben Hanly. They were already familiar with Trusttun's work, having made 'about twenty windows'¹¹ to his designs between 1980 and 1985.

The *New Zealand Herald* reported in 1987 that the Unisys window was 'one of the largest stained glass commissions in the country'.¹² Consisting of four hundred and two glass panels, imported from England, Germany and the United States, the completed work was to cover one-hundred and sixty-four square metres of a three-sided glass canopy twenty feet above The Terrace, Wellington.

Trusttun named his design 'Northern Lights'. Inspired by an Indian necklace, the work is essentially made up of hundreds of fragmented circular 'beads' of colour. Variations of purple, red, amber and blue light dance across a grey glass background. Trusttun's design appears to be free and unconfined by its

location. His composition resembles shattered droplets of coloured light falling and spilling over the edges of a plain glass sheet.

At forty-six years of age Trusttun's energy and enthusiasm for art was as strong as it had been during the 1960s. An active and curious artist throughout his career, Trusttun had investigated drawing, painting, collage, assemblage, construction, print-making and stained glass. As 1987 opened however, Trusttun found that he wanted to concentrate his energies. Rather than continue at the hectic pace of 1986, without stopping to invest a considerable period of time in any one idea, he was now ready to develop his ideas fully. Having adjusted to his new life in Waimate, he was eager to combine his past experience, techniques and discoveries, with his present, and refine his art.

With characteristic fervour, Trusttun began to scrutinize his environment intending to discover a new source of inspiration. Living in Waimate brought with it a whole range of activities and experiences to draw upon. It took the artist outside the domestic urban zone of the house and garden and onto the farm. Over the next four years as Trusttun became more involved in the exercise of riding, grooming, feeding and observing the general behaviour of horses, the animals began to appear frequently in his paintings.

Horses have fascinated Trusttun throughout his career. For example, the Sarjeant Gallery currently holds two works from the early 'sixties in its Trusttun collection relating to horses, *Untitled (Horse)* (1962), and *Pointing Rider* (1963). During the 1970s horses appeared again as playthings and toys for his children in *Rockhorse* (1974), and *Hannah on the Rocking Horse* (1974) (pl. 12). The early 1980s also saw his interest in horses continue as his

daughter Hannah became involved with show-jumping. In 1980 he drew *Hannah on a Horse*, in 1984 he created the collage portrait *Book of Dreams*, and *Slightly Altered* in c.1985-86.

Nineteen-eighty-seven is the first time that Trusttum actually concentrates on developing this subject matter further. He began observing, experiencing and interpreting horses and seeking new ways to depict them. Trusttum studied the paintings of horses from other cultures to learn more about the animal, and discovered that these cultures painted the horse 'as they know it, not as they see it'.¹³

Trusttum had a vast range of examples to learn from. As far back as c.15,000-13,000 B.C, in a cave at Lascaux, Dordogne, France, artists had been painting horses. From 1987, Trusttum has openly responded to many art-historical references, both ancient and contemporary, examining Persian miniatures, Chinese and Mongolian horse painting, pre-Renaissance Italian painting and Klee, Miró, Picasso ¹⁴ and Matisse.

With his knowledge of art history and his own observations as a 'horse connoisseur',¹⁵ Trusttum produced the following works: *Untitled (Cropping Horse Studies)* (1987) (pl. 27), *Oamaru* (1987), and *Jewelled Horse* (c.1987-88) (pl. 28).

In *Untitled* (pl. 27), a set of four paintings, the artist examines the feeding horse from three different angles: above, frontal and profile. Trusttum remarks that a horse 'should be like a table - legs at all four corners'.¹⁶ Simplified and abstracted, stylistically these paintings appear to have been

influenced by his experiments with woodcuts and observations of primitive art. His surface treatment is flat, defined, patterned and linear. He has broken the body of the horse into separate zones of colour, divided by heavy outlines. Focussing on the solidity of a horse at rest, the artist's style emphasizes this by being still and heavy. Concentrating on the powerful head and strong legs, each of Trusttum's cropping horses possess a primitive, commanding beauty.

In *Oamaru* Trusttum's horse is again at rest, but this time it is a more delicate form. The artist describes the horse with an economy of line. It is slender and graceful, alluding to movement and speed. Trusttum's depiction of this horse appears Eastern in its influence, however, his horse is angular with no gentle curves.

Trusttum's primitive print-like style is an abstract embodiment of the horses' solidity and monumentality. With *Jewelled Horse* (pl. 28) the artist intended to 'capture' its speed and grace. Using an energetic, delicate tangle of lines he describes movement by overlapping many views of a horses head. Utilising the entire canvas, his composition is wispy and transparent. The eyes of the horse, in dusky red, brown and blue, are the only areas of solid colour. The undefined form, the repetition of the eyes and the 'shivering' line all reflect the movement of a horse as it throws its head from side-to-side.

From 1980 to 1986 Trusttum's stylistic development was characterised by an unhampered, instinctive approach. Following 1986 he sought an uncluttered purity via a different course, through concentration and investigation. Pat Unger was to observe in 1989 that: 'for Trusttum, the fundamental, logical principles of pure painting are reflected in the works of European masters,

particularly Henri Matisse'. Trusttum wanted to be 'cool like him, not 'cool' as in 'laid back' but as in not being thrown out of step or over-excited by side issues or indiscretions'.¹⁷

Although ready to refine his ideas, processes and styles, each new year still brought with it a continuation of experimentation, with a variety of styles evolving alongside one another. The late 'eighties saw a change in Trusttum's artistic values. Elizabeth Caldwell reported that he now believed; 'if a painter's work is not evolutionary, the motivations or source material, [are] suspect'.¹⁸

Four examples of the artist's interest in developing a consistent style between 1987 and 1990 are *Jewelled Horse* (1987-88), *Boots* (1988), *Me* (1989) (pl. 31) and *Cutting Tail* (1990) (pl.32). In order to achieve the open shimmering surface of *Jewelled Horse*, the artist had revived Paul Klee's 'transfer drawing line' technique that he had successfully adapted to his 'Banner' paintings of 1976-79. Using quickly sketched chalk lines as a rough guideline, Trusttum experimented with Klee's method of transferring paint from one paper to another. For the *Jewelled Horse*, the artist achieved the thin 'frayed' line effect by placing a sheet of 'paint flicked paper' over the sketch and drawing into it with a knife. This produced a final result described by Pat Unger as: 'a tangle of chalk lines that look quilted or over-sewn onto the canvas'.¹⁹

In *Boots* Trusttum uses dark 'frayed' lines with no added colour in his composition. The artist has depicted an active figure shovelling dirt or manure into a cart. The canvas has been broken down into simplified forms: rain jacket, gloves, boots and a cart's wheels. The human figure dominates the entire picture plane, spread from the top right-hand corner to the sides and

the bottom of the canvas in a triangular format. Trusttun's treatment of the surface resembles that of an etching; it has a flat, delicate and broken finish.

The next phase of this development is revealed in *Me* (1989). Here the skeletal design is combined with broad patches of colour. The artist has painted himself working on the farm. Viewed from above, the figure is flattened, distorted and divided into separate zones. With a minimum of detail, the addition of colour stops the 'farmer' from merging into the background. In between the blue acrylic outlines Trusttun has painted black trousers and boots, a blue jersey, an amber face and a red hat. A painting and 'sketch' combined, his treatment of *Me* is more defined than *Boots* (1988).

Cutting Tail (1990) brings another variation of his experimentation with Klee's technique, developed from the 1970s. The canvas consists of a distorted human figure and a horse's head, almost entirely described by a continuous line. A compact circular composition, Trusttun has again ignored colour to concentrate on linear pattern and design. The picture plane is filled with abstracted exaggerated forms in black paint on green chalk. Overlapping a caricature of a horse's head is a man, consisting of a face, one foot and elongated arms holding a pair of scissors. Trusttun's painted sketch-like style is powerful and eye-catching. Without colour or solidity, the 'frayed' line adds an air of mystery to his interpretation of everyday subject matter.

This continuation of a recognisable style over a four-year period was unusual for Trusttun. Aside from his 'Banner' paintings of the late 1970s, the artist tended to avoid a prolonged study of one stylistic technique. During the late

1980s, however, he had become interested in art that showed an evolution, and styles that displayed simplification and control.

The year 1988 was a period of prolific variety. Two exhibitions held during 1989 reveal the extent of his output and interests during 1988, these were *The Art of Horsemanship*, held at the Sarjeant Gallery in March, and *The Many Faces of Trusttum* shown at the Aigantighe Art Gallery in Timaru over May. In these exhibitions Trusttum had focussed on two major topics: the activities of horses, and observations inspired by a 'primitive' mask. Within each series the artist's subject matter remains constant as his style varies.

For his exhibition on horses Trusttum gathered together two groups of work from 1988. One group was from observing horses in the field, the other was based on the 'activities associated with them'. The content of his collection moved from 'direct studies' of horses heads, to 'complex compositions' of riding and working with the animals, for example, his series of works on the 'horse and masked rider'. 'Some twenty paintings were made',²⁰ each using the same basic composition. The horse has been simplified into a geometric pattern, with three legs across the bottom of the picture plane and the neck and head in the upper left-hand corner. The rider is allocated only a small proportion of the surface down the right-hand side.

Using the one composition for many paintings gave the artist the freedom to explore a variety of techniques and styles. Concentrating on the horse and rider Trusttum again had a vast source of inspiration to draw upon for his interpretation. Equestrians have appeared in Egyptian, Persian and Greek art, they were also popular during the Italian Renaissance and in nineteenth-

century Romanticism. Generally a depiction of the hunter, warrior or soldier, the equestrian composition would convey an image of the all – powerful conquering hero. Trusttum's horses and riders however, have no identifying costumes or accessories, they appear on the canvas as silhouettes defined only by bold outlines or vibrant colours.

Stylistically, the artist's paintings seem to have been influenced more by Klee, Picasso and Matisse, with the faceted surfaces and emphasis on line. *Over Poles* (1988) (pl.29), *Through the Mud* (1988) and *Russian Horse and Rider* (1988), are three examples of Trusttum working through his thoughts in relation to the one topic. Rather than over work a canvas, he would stop and start again on another canvas. His was a process of 're-drawing, re-defining, eliminating, taking risks and emphasising only certain areas'.²¹

In each painting Trusttum would concentrate on a different factor. Experimenting with opposites, some paintings would be simplified, others detailed, bright and open or dark and dense. In *Over Poles* (1988), the artist examines a combination of the linear and the dense. With a style reminiscent of Klee's, Trusttum has reduced the horse and figure to a network of ghostly outlines, floating on a dark fragmented background of abstract shapes and warm colours.

In *Through the Mud* (1988), Trusttum has painted two equestrian figures superimposed, one in black outline, the other in white, on top of a ground of red paint and Waimate soil. The black horse is thin and elongated, the white is heavy and curved, their opposing placement on the canvas has determined Trusttum's interpretation.

With *Russian Horse and Rider* (1988), he focusses on colour and pattern. The animal and the human figure have been broken into plates of rich colour resembling a Matisse collage cut-out. Shades of red, orange, green and blue are contained by heavy black outlines the horse and rider have been defined not by these lines, but by the unpainted canvas.

Horses were to continue to occupy a large proportion of Trusttun's time during 1988, and aside from the 'horse and rider' series, the artist painted compositions about grooming horses and observing them grazing or playing. With these works his diversity continues. No surface is treated in the same manner. Typical of Trusttun's restless nature, he had achieved cohesion in his subject matter but not in his treatment. This varied collection of observations, excited and surprised his critics. A reviewer for the *Wanganui Chronicle* reported that:

The works reflect a joy that the artist has found in the subject . . . New forms emerge and it is enjoyable to analyse how Mr. Trusttun invents such a variety of ways of communicating the theme, through the influence of overseas artists. In fact the exhibition is full of surprises. Anyone who visits the Sarjeant Gallery to view this exhibition will be well rewarded. There is something new to discover on each visit.²²

Following the *Art of Horsemanship*, the artist exhibited *The Many Faces of Trusttun*. In these works his subject matter moved temporarily off the farm and into the studio to concentrate on a mask made of wood and opossum skin in his possession, originally purchased from the Arts Centre in Wellington. Trusttun had used the mask before, as a substitute for the human face, but he had never focussed on it for an entire series. In 1988 he produced eighteen

'very large' canvases, approximately 1.5 metres by 2.5 metres, inspired by this mask. Simply a 'tool' for his ideas, Trusttum had 'no special underlying reason for using the mask, no serious emotive intentions'.²³ The simplified coarse facial features allowed the artist to concentrate on and refine his technique.

During this series Trusttum developed two ways of interpreting the object. In one way, the 'face' was depicted in broad colour and pattern in another, the emphasis was on a linear simplicity. For example, *2 Faced* (1988) (pl. 30), combines aspects of both approaches. In an abstracted mass of coloured shapes the only recognisable forms are the eyes. Aside from an open area at the top and down the left-hand side of the canvas, the remaining surface is covered with broad patches of intense reds, blues, and greens surrounded by heavy black outlines. Trusttum's treatment of the eyes in the upper portion recalls the lighter, linear works of the series, where black lines are only partially filled in with colour or left blank to expose the chalk lines of the original drawing.

As Trusttum shifted between the dense and the airy, some works appeared as spontaneous as a sketch, unresolved and under-painted, while others glowed with rich colour and complexity. The artist would prepare a sketch in chalk then paint over these lines with a 1/2 inch brush, and apply colour with an etching plate, then adding flecks, dots and splatters for extra detail. Interested in a process of constructing and reducing his forms, Trusttum's 'mask' series revealed this progression. Pat Unger explains that, 'like blue-prints showing the first sketched planning stage through to the last, they are built by juxtaposing impression on impression and idea by idea to produce typically flat, free and energetic design paintings'.²⁴

The artist drew on many sources for this series; from books on the art of Papua New Guinea to Picasso. Inspired by the heightened colour and vigorous line of Oceanic art, Trusttun reduced and simplified his compositions, and emphasized the masks' angularity. Trusttun, on closer examination, has combined both frontal and profile views of the mask in some compositions. Within a two-dimensional surface there exists a multitude of view points; each image emerges or disappears in a manner reminiscent of Cubism. The Cubists had decided, 'why should one be constricted to a single viewpoint in painting a figure?' 'Why not try to make the canvas a synthesis of different views?'²⁵ With the analogy of African art in mind, Picasso had painted what he saw, as well as what he knew existed.

The one unifying factor behind Trusttun's works during 1988 was his goal to 'achieve the effect of a sketch'.²⁶ 'Matisse', Trusttun points out, 'does many of his best passages with just turps washes and a few direction lines. And he has the guts to leave it'.²⁷

In his quest for simplicity and purity Trusttun produced countless works in a process of trial and elimination. Line began to dominate his paintings, and colour became more subdued as he reduced his canvases to flat, monumental, linear designs. Pat Unger observed in 1988 that the artist 'does not waste time. Many of his works are, if anything, under-painted'.²⁸ Although his compositions were simpler, more defined, his investigation of his subject matter was thorough and eventful. Change over 1988 was no longer abrupt and confusing. It had become subtle and refined.

During 1989 and 1990 this smooth evolution was maintained. His attention, however, was still divided as he explored two major areas, caring for his horses, and working on the farm. Trusttun would paint about rubbing hot spots on a horses back with a shovel, or trimming tails, or riding and being dumped. In his canvases based on working, anonymous abstracted figures would be digging, axing, chopping, cutting hedges, planting, pulling hay and pushing manure.

The final years of the 1980s marked a period of advance and renewal as Trusttun built on his past discoveries and pushed aside any strong influences from the leaders of modern art. It was time to continue his own personal evolution, unhampered and unhindered by traditions. Like the French 'art brutalist' Jean Dubuffet's paintings, Trusttun's work began to reflect the idea that 'each living creature has its own individual wholly personal notion of reality'.²⁹

In order to heighten his personal vision, Trusttun's art continued to centre around his family, with the major focus on his own experience. The artist kept his subject matter specific and simple, so his interpretation could vary freely. Trusttun transformed the mundane into the curious and entertaining by using unusual viewpoints and constantly changing his surface treatment. Ignoring traditional perspectives, he flattened, reduced and distorted his subject matter, creating a delicate surface in muted colour and exposing his method of working.

In *Digging Post* (1989), for example, the artist has simplified and abstracted his subject matter. Recording his own experience of constructing a wire fence,

painting with pencil-thin lines, the addition of colour patches and a reduction of surface detail, Trusttum has evolved a greater clarity of vision by using his 'frayed' line technique. The composition consists of an unusual little man in a red and blue hat, orange jersey and brown trousers digging a post-hole in an open field. The only other items in the painting are, a line of red twine marking the direction of the post-holes, and a wire fence in the distance. Aside from a few flecks of grass dotted across the picture plane, the remaining canvas has been left blank.

With a limit on content and precision of handling, Trusttum livens his surface by combining a variety of viewpoints. In a tilted picture plane the fence line recedes to a vanishing point beyond the left-hand side. The perspective employed for the figure has been divided into two parts; the legs and the lower part of the body are flattened and viewed from a three-quarter angle, while the head and arms are viewed from above, creating a curious figure with its head 'glued' on to its torso.

As he focused on familiar topics and kept his compositions simple, Trusttum found that: 'the start of a painting often has the best bits with only later touches necessary to bring the rest of the painting up to an over all standard'.³⁰ The artist discovered this by continuing to develop his ideas in the format of a 'series'. Using a number of canvases Trusttum would focus on a different element. In one work the figure might be emphasised, and the background ignored; in another the figure and background are merged together. Each canvas provides clues for the next as it uncovers something more than the last. Although some surfaces are more resolved than others, each is vital to his working process. A step by step evolution through an idea, the many

paintings, in a sense, become one work. Trusttun believed that an artist should 'never stop working. Yours is not to question but to do. Slip your brain into neutral and paint'.³¹

In January of 1990 Trusttun exhibited ten of his 1989 works at the Loft Gallery, Motueka. Inspired by his work on the farm, the artist described the subject matter of his paintings as 'a diary of what I do. If I was a soldier I would paint about soldiering. I suppose'.³² In *Digging* (1989), Trusttun concentrates on the activity of digging a post hole. On a tilted surface at the centre of the canvas, the post-hole is viewed directly from above. A man's head is at the bottom of the picture plane, with a large transparent arm holding onto the shovel so as not to obscure the post-hole, with partially hidden leg and boot resting nearby. More involvement from the artist is given by the addition of boot prints across the larger-than-life image.

Often the first encounter with a Trusttun painting is one of confusion. This is particularly due to the peculiar viewpoints which cause the composition to appear jumbled and haphazard. On closer inspection however, the human figure or horse forms take shape, revealing planning and experience. Graeme Stradling believed that, 'your original notion of artist out of control is becoming one of artist in command and from there the only way is up'.³³

The interests of 1989 were extended into 1990, Trusttun's everyday experiences with horses and the farm featured strongly in his work. The 'frayed' line technique was maintained in works like *Cutting Tail* (1990) (pl. 32) and *Dumped* (1990). With *Dumped* the treatment of the line is extended into the colour patches in a scratched broken and sketchy cover. A bird's eye view of a

rider being thrown from his horse, Trusttun's tumbled and disorientating composition reflects the experience itself.

He also painted a series inspired by the game of tennis and one about the process of making art, for example, *Tennis* (1990), *Cutting Canvas* (1990) (pl.33), and *Drawing* (1990). However, just when the artist appeared to be refining and defining his style, these two groups of works on sport and art show Trusttun's style gradually changing as he sought a greater sense of freedom. Forms became heavier, almost out of focus, colour and surface treatment was not as crisp and clean as it had been in the past. In *Tennis*, greys and browns dominate and the paint appears rough, scratchy and hurriedly applied.

This technique continues with *Drawing* and *Cutting Canvas*. On a tilted picture plane with limited recession, Trusttun's viewpoints remain peculiar, his figures kneel on the vertical canvas with up-turned faces staring out at the spectator. Moving away from the energetic delicate line with contained colour, the artist's handling of paint is child-like. For example, in *Drawing*, his outlines are heavy and the paint is uneven, colour either does not touch the edges or it overlaps. With *Cutting Canvas* (pl. 33), the acrylics look textured and heavy; they have been dripped, dabbed or pressed onto the surface, creating a webbed effect. Beneath this network of dark green, blue, brown and red paint though, the white canvas is still visible.

In his 'working' paintings Trusttun's style evolves even further as he combines the spontaneous with the planned. Alongside a change in technique came a subtle change in his materials. While he continued to paint with acrylic on canvas, the artist began to use mud, hay and chaff directly on the

picture plane . In *Digging* (1990) (pl. 34) Trusttun has utilised a mixture of mud and acrylic paint. Waimate soil fills the face and hands of his digger, while the rest of the canvas is loosely treated with brown and grey paint.

Tennis, *Drawing*, *Cutting Canvas*, and *Digging* (1990) all belong to the same stylistic group. Trusttun's figures are large, bulky and undefined. While these paintings demonstrate his stylistic direction, they are not fully representative of his development during 1990. For Trusttun was also adapting a variation on his 'linear' style to his mixed media canvases.

In his collection of works entitled 'Pushing Through the Mud' (1990), the artist alternated between a defined and undefined treatment of the picture plane. Based on his experience of 'feeding out to the horses during a torrential rain storm that lasted several days', Trusttun produced a series of works at a 'rate of at least one a day'.³⁴ Using the same basic composition for each one, of a figure pushing a cart, viewed from above, he again had the freedom to experiment with his technique. Filling the entire canvas with an upturned face, hands and boot-clad feet, Trusttun documented the step-by-step physical effort and emotional strain of pushing a cart through the mud.

In *Mud* (1990) the figure and cart appear to have been swallowed by a mass of acrylic paint and soil. The head and clenched hands remain visible but the brown and grey background obscures the definition of the man's boots. On his face is an expression of determination as he frowns at the viewer. The surface of *Mud* is dark, rough and patchy. In *Gate* (1990), however, his treatment is light and defined. The canvas is divided into separate zones; each form is surrounded by a thin white outline, reminiscent of his print-like technique.

With attention to detail, Trusttun has simulated the fabric weave of the figure's jersey, tyre treads and hay in the cart, by scraping away the paint in criss-crosses and zig-zags. At the top of the picture plane is a distant view of a gate. Only half-way through his task of pushing the feed cart through the mud, there is a look of anticipation on the little man's face.

In *Glimpse* (1990) (pl. 35) the horses are in view and there is an expression of relief on the upturned face. A similar composition to *Gate* but with more emphasis on the boots, *Glimpse* combines the planning and definition of *Gate* with the disorder of *Mud*. Dark, rough paint has been more evenly applied to the figure and contained by partially finished outlines. A variety of warm colours and areas of bare canvas keep the image from merging into the background.

During 1989 and 1990 Trusttun's paintings centre on the human experience, particularly that of the artist himself. With his subject matter ranging from mundane chores like digging to personal works about love, the use of the 'series' during 1989 and 1990 brought a sense of cohesion to Trusttun's artistic development. It enabled him to concentrate on his ideas and temporarily tame his sporadic experimentation. Still feverishly prolific in his output, however, Trusttun was described by Graeme Stradling in 1989 as 'our cultural equivalent of a gusher in the oil industry. Relentless in his determination to push the limits of his subject matter as well as his media'.³⁵

The period between 1986 and 1990 had been a time of adjusting, discarding, reviving and discovering for Trusttun. Moving to Waimate opened a whole new range of possibilities in both subject matter and style. Although

Trusttun's diversity during the late 1980s was more gradual and subtle than it had been in the past, it is clear the artist was still restless and curious. By 1990 he was refining, not confining, his development. He was discovering his own areas of interest and personal styles.

While remaining in close contact since 1987 with his art dealer Bronwen Marwick of the Loft Gallery, Motueka, at the end of the 1980s Trusttun was in a position to open his own exhibition space in Christchurch. Exhibiting alongside his wife Lee and his son Martin's fabric and clothes designs, the gallery is known as 'Trusttun Works'. Located on the ground floor of the Trusttun's Christchurch property, at Number 18 Peterborough Street, the gallery opened to the public in September of 1990.

Interest in Trusttun's art is continuing into the 1990s. The Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui, organised a major exhibition in 1991, concentrating on the years following *Philip Trusttun Selected Works 1962-1979*. The gallery planned to display two separate shows side by side, respectively entitled *The Sarjeant's Trusttuns* and *From Living*.

From expressive rebellious beginnings during the 1960s, through three decades of observing, learning and experimenting, Philip Trusttun has retained the vigour and freshness that caught critical attention in the 'sixties, thus fulfilling Hamish Keith's prediction of 1966 that 'he is likely to become one of the most important painters of his generation'.³⁶

Through three decades of constant change and practically no stylistic repetition, Trusttun never settled into a consistently recognisable stylistic development.

Although refusing to stay with one successful style, there are continuities. Trusttun is a painter of ordinary life, of everyday experiences, activities and surroundings. Ross Marwick's description of Trusttun's position at the end of the 1980s explains just how the artist has continued to surprise his critics:

Trusttun is a well established New Zealand painter. Unlike many other artists with maturity, Trusttun's work has grown no less innovative. He has established style, technique and method, but has not fallen into the trap of painting safely.³⁷

With a renewed enthusiasm and energy for art inspired by living in Waimate, Trusttun is still not yet ready to specialise or confine his development. However, at fifty years of age, Trusttun is showing a willingness to examine the full potential of his ideas. By 1990 it is obvious that he has matured as an artist. His styles have become progressively more individual, and his subject matter more personal. With the opening of the new decade, Trusttun stands ready to continue this course of self-discovery and investigation.

ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER FIVE

1. Lee Harris, 'Taking art to people'. *The Otago Daily Times*, 27 April 1990.
2. Bill Milbank, *Philip Trusttum: The Art of Horsemanship* (Wanganui, 1989), p.2.
3. Graham Reid, 'Stretching the Real'. *New Zealand Listener*, 27 September 1986, p.58.
4. Rob Taylor, 'Novel views of house and garden'. *The Dominion*, 18 August 1986, p.12.
5. Pat Unger, 'Trusttum's paintings'. *The Press*, 11 October 1986, p.16.
6. T. J. McNamara, 'Interesting exhibitions bring back life to city'. *The New Zealand Herald*, 30 June 1986.
7. Pat Unger, 'Trusttum Woodcuts'. *The Press*, 5 August 1986, p.23.
8. Gary Arthur, 'Car tail-light inspired Catholic window'. *The Press*, 28 July 1981, p.21.
9. Fiona Ciaran, 'Artists in Glass'. *Art New Zealand*, vol. 39, 1985, p.35.
10. *ibid.*, p.36.
11. 'City artists build huge stained glass window'. *The Press*, 24 December 1986.
12. 'Art in High Rise'. *The New Zealand Herald*, 20 November 1987.
13. Peter Leech, 'The Feeling of Life: Philip Trusttum's Recent Horseplay'. *Art New Zealand*, vol. 47, 1988, p.80.
14. 'Exhibition full of surprises'. *The Wanganui Chronicle*, 2 March 1989.
15. See n. 13, p.79.
16. *ibid.*
17. Pat Unger, 'Profile: Philip Trusttum'. *C.S.A Preview*, C.S.A Gallery, Christchurch, no. 144, January/February, 1989.
18. Elizabeth Caldwell, *The Many Faces of Trusttum*. (Timaru, 1989), p.3.
19. See n. 17.
20. See n. 2, p.3.
21. See n. 17.
22. See n. 14.
23. See n. 18, p.2.
24. Pat Unger, 'Faces of Trusttum'. *The Press*, 20 July 1989, p.15.

25. Alan Bowness, *Modern European Art* (London, 1972), p.109.
26. See n. 18.
27. See n. 17.
28. Pat Unger, 'Philip Trusttum paintings'. *The Press*, 9 August 1988, p.19.
29. Andreas Franzke, *Dubuffet* (New York, 1981), p.9.
30. See n. 17.
31. *ibid.*
32. Corinne Ambler, 'Paintings are his diary...'. *The Nelson Evening Mail*, 24 January 1990.
33. Graeme Stradling, 'Trusttum up with the best'. *The Nelson Evening Mail*, 8 February 1989.
34. Bill Milbank, *Trusttum: From Living*, (Wanganui, 1991), p.2.
35. See n. 33.
36. Hamish Keith, *Eve*, September 1966, p.14.
37. Ross Marwick, 'Trusttum shows recent works'. *The Nelson Evening Mail*, 6 April 1988, p.8.

CHAPTER SIX

RE-DEFINING TRUSTTUM.

'I have just been turning over the garden as it were, letting things 'grow', not trying to confine them into rules or methods of feeling. Each painting is an individual organism, a separate enterprise'.¹

(Philip Trusttum, 1969)

The above statement could apply to Trusttum's entire artistic development. Because rules were unimportant to him every painting, or series of works, offered a chance for growth and renewal. Experimentation and change were expected from this creative and energetic artist, allowing an unrestricted stylistic evolution.

In order to place Trusttum within the New Zealand context his style has to be identified and defined. This, however, is not an easy task when dealing with an artist whose personality and work have been described as 'spontaneous and swift, exuding positive energy and confidence'.² These are not the attributes of someone who can be restricted within the bounds of any one particular artistic movement or style.

Philip Trusttum is a productive and impulsive artist. His output is extensive, not only in number but also in media. His style tends to vary radically from year to year, even week to week. There appears to be no pattern to his development, no consistency in his work. How, then, can we begin to understand Trusttum the artist as a whole?

His willingness to experiment with different styles in no pre-determined order does make it difficult to identify a 'Trusttun style', but it is not impossible. Over the years, however, his freedom and diversity have both puzzled and annoyed critics and art historians. This is largely because his art resists easy or clear categorization. Trusttun's work tends to defy their generally 'fool-proof' methods of examination - namely to 'shoehorn' an artist's work into a well-known art-historical category. This method generally offers an immediate understanding of what an artist is doing, and a sound starting point for further investigation.

The format of the general survey text on New Zealand art demands that the author be specific. This approach is adequate for many artists, but not for an artist such as Trusttun. With so much material to cover it is inevitable that important points are often missed out and what was intended to be specific becomes vague and often misleading. Another limitation of the survey text is that an explanation of specific periods of work cannot stand as a definition for what follows. In 1968 Mark Young described Trusttun's style as 'expressionist'.³ While an adequate description for his art then, the term has continued to be applied to Trusttun even as he moved on from this point. Difficulty arises when it is assumed that statements such as this, during particular 'phases' of Trusttun's career, are still relevant to his work today.

The major works available on New Zealand art that include Trusttun are relatively well spaced. Mark Young published *New Zealand Art, Painting 1950-1967* in 1968; Gil Docking produced *Two Hundred Years of New Zealand Painting* in 1971; Peter Cape's *New Zealand Painting Since 1960* appeared in

1979; Gordon H. Brown and Hamish Keith's second edition of *An Introduction to New Zealand Painting 1839-1980* was published in 1982; Elva Bett's text *New Zealand Art: A Modern Perspective* appeared in 1986; and Michael Dunn's *A Concise History of New Zealand Painting* was published in 1991. Because Trusttun's art is discussed in all of these books there is the possibility that if the works were combined they might provide a clear view of his development during the 1960s, '70s and '80s. For the reader who is unfamiliar with Trusttun's paintings though, analysis of the literature serves to confuse rather than clarify. Each explanation offered by the different authors concerning his influences, style and development appears to conflict with the others.

Mark Young described Trusttun as working in a 'flamboyant and often arbitrary manner that draws a great deal from Karel Appel, the Dutch expressionist painter'.⁴ Docking saw the 'apparent influence of the work of the American abstract expressionist painter Willem de Kooning',⁵ while Cape found it 'dangerously easy' to look at his work and 'find oneself thinking of Van Gogh'.⁶ Elva Bett, with the benefit of hindsight, saw Trusttun as a 'pivotal painter' whose style moved between 'realism and abstraction', 'exuberance' and the 'subdued',⁷ and whose influences ranged from Van Gogh to Klee and Miró. Michael Dunn found Trusttun to have a 'style of Abstract Expressionism based loosely on his knowledge [of] artists such as Hans Hofmann',⁸ and then states that he 'gradually moved away from this kind of painting'.⁹

When this information is combined, the general texts inform the reader that Philip Trusttun is a contemporary New Zealand artist who generally works in

a 'painterly' manner, and who is influenced by early twentieth-century modern European and American art. This appears to be as close as they can get to a consistent definition of Philip Trusttum's art owing to the limitations of the survey texts. However, once the literature has provided this collective introduction to the artist, the reader has become aware that Trusttum's art is subject to radical change. Knowing that there must be more to Trusttum than this, aware that his influences are vast and varied, the reader is still left wondering 'who are those influences?' and 'what kind of painter is Trusttum?'.

The magazines and catalogues can provide that much-needed information. They enable the reader to find out more about Trusttum's background, his style, themes and influences. However, while the magazines are naturally more contemporary and specific, providing reviews and updates of the artist's development, some articles tend to be too complex. The reader, with his/her limited background knowledge of Trusttum, either written or visual, is confronted in these reviews with discussions of isolated and often contemporary issues which only serve to make his art seem more confusing. Once again readers are left with more questions than answers: 'what is Trusttum doing?', and more importantly, 'what has he done?'

The most comprehensive account of Trusttum's work to date is the Sarjeant Gallery's catalogue *Philip Trusttum Selected Works 1962-1979*. Published in 1980 it is a valuable source of both visual and written material. The catalogue includes two informative essays by Gordon H. Brown and Peter Leech. Brown attempts to structure Philip Trusttum's work chronologically from 1960 to 1979, while Leech takes a more specific approach and examines the question of

Trusttun's style. After 1980 nothing so comprehensive exists and the reader is left to rely upon magazine and newspaper reviews for information concerning Trusttun's work.

As a whole, the literature is frustratingly limited and appears ambiguous. Readers are largely left to draw their own conclusions from the limited information presented to them. Having expected to find one relatively consistent and thorough interpretation of Trusttun's art, out of a variety of interpretations two diverse patterns seem to emerge. Several authors consistently claim that Philip Trusttun is an 'expressionist' artist, while others argue that his art lacks any true 'style'.

Trusttun's connection with expressionist styles arose from his association with Rudolf Gopas at the School of Fine Arts. This Lithuanian-born artist has been targeted by art historians as the painter responsible for introducing 'Expressionism' to New Zealand. Rodney Wilson stated in 1984 that: 'the influence of the late Rudi Gopas provides a direct link back to earlier German Expressionism and accounts for much of the southern concern for anxious images'.¹⁰ Because Trusttun painted largely in this manner during the early 1960s art historians incorporated him in the Regionalist school of thought that saw 'expressionism' as a style peculiar to the Canterbury region.

Critics and art historians have forced Trusttun's art into this 'expressionist' mould at an early stage of his artistic development and regardless of the fact that his work has changed frequently since then the tag 'expressionist' has remained. As late as 1986 the *Timaru Herald* was still identifying 'Philip Trusttun [as] an expressionist painter'.¹¹

The claim that Trusttun lacks a personal style, stemming from the observation that he tends to change his style frequently, is much broader. 'Trusttun it is said, lacks style; even Trusttun cannot successively paint like Trusttun'.¹² As a result of this apparent lack of style, critics and connoisseurs began to question his status as an artist. His tendency to change is a quality that art historians and critics have found disconcerting, largely because it is difficult to explain. What they have found even more unacceptable is that when he changes direction his influences can often be traced to the modern leaders of European art. The artist has been criticised for this and has been accused of being imitative and eclectic. In 1984 John Hurrell described Trusttun's work as revealing a 'great debt' to the modern leaders, 'when he goes through an 'apprenticeship' of mimicking their methods of working'.¹³

Philip Trusttun's debt to his artistic predecessors, however, should not be viewed as negative. Artists and architects have been inspired by past achievements in the arts for centuries. Trusttun is learning from the leaders of modern art, he is 'reinstating in a personal way some of the conclusions arrived at by older artists'.¹⁴

These two claims of 'Trusttun the expressionist' and 'Trusttun the style-less' conflict with and contradict one another. Separately they are not adequate explanations for they exclude important issues and mislead the reader. When taken together they are equally inadequate, serving only to confuse. How can Trusttun be an 'expressionist' artist if his work is 'style-less'?

"Expressionism', as an art label, originated in Germany around 1910'.¹⁵ Customarily it refers to certain developments in both French and German art between 1905 and 1930. There was never actually any organised artistic movement called 'Expressionism'. The essential idea behind Expressionist work was the 'art should not be limited to the recording of visual impressions, but should express emotional experiences and spiritual values'.¹⁶

Expressionism is associated principally with two informal groups of artists: *Die Brücke* and *Der Blaue Reiter*. Those involved within *Die Brücke* were, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff and Emil Nolde. Through the use of intense colours, turbulent paint, and the distortion of forms to the point of brutality, *Brücke* Expressionisms' instinctive style was intended to reflect the artist's emotional state, to 'transmit, and perhaps give release to, emotions and emotionally charged messages'.¹⁷

The artists involved with *Der Blaue Reiter*, however, were not so concerned with personal anxieties or social comment. Kandinsky, Franz Marc and Klee for example, shared 'a common conviction about the need for spirituality in art'.¹⁸ 'The tuning of pictorial means to the emotional or spiritual urge within the artist'¹⁹ was what Kandinsky sought when he developed his lyrical abstraction.

In what sense is Trusttum an 'expressionist?' During the early 1960s with works like *No* (c.1964-65) (pl. 2), and *Woman* (1965) (pl. 3), and again from 1973 to 1975, with *Interior and Hedge* (c.1974) (pl. 11) and *Joker* (1975) (pl. 13), Trusttum was directly influenced by expressionist styles; first, through art

books and his teacher Gopas, and, secondly, through his own knowledge of the originals after his trip to Europe in 1972.

Trusttum's approach to form is flattened and abstracted, his paint work is gestural and broken, and colour is intense and unnatural. The artist has rejected natural representation for an unrefined, seemingly haphazard portrayal of his surroundings.

While Trusttum's paintings obviously share characteristics of European Expressionist styles, the label 'expressionist' is too general to describe his work. For example, in his handling of paint and distortion of forms, Trusttum's 'expressionism' has more in common with that of *Der Blaue Reiter*, he does not share the *Brücke* Expressionists' emotional concerns. Where their primary concern was to 'communicate the inner truth of the feelings and emotions [they] experienced in the contemporary world',²⁰ more often than not Trusttum has no symbolic intentions. His commitment is not to the subject matter, but to technique and process, and to expanding the boundaries of his two-dimensional media. His subject matter is the vehicle for these explorations.

Trusttum is a 'down-to-earth' and open-minded artist. Wary of any artistic pretension, he asserts that art is something that should be enjoyed by artist and spectator equally: 'All that stuff about agonizing self-sacrifice', he says, 'most of it's rubbish you know'.²¹

Only recently have art historians pointed out that what is different about Trusttum's adaptation of European Expressionism is that it 'largely lacks the

angst, blackness and social criticism'²² of his New Zealand contemporaries Gopas and Clairmont. Derek Schulz observed in 1980 that Trusttun had introduced an 'important new element in New Zealand art: The element of a convincing, committed optimism'.²³ Michael Dunn in 1991 found that in Trusttun's work over the years 'his imagery seems more positive, more a celebration of life and of creative energy than a morbid kind of self-analysis'.²⁴

With a complete disregard for the 'doom and gloom'²⁵ preoccupations of many New Zealand artists, and an interest in working processes and materials, Philip Trusttun's activities and concerns, could also be aligned with those artists belonging to, or directly influenced by, American Abstract Expressionism, for example, De Kooning, Hofmann, Pollock, and Karel Appel.

Abstract Expressionism, or 'Painterly Abstraction', has its roots in Surrealism, defined by Andre Breton in the First Surrealist Manifesto of 1924 as 'pure psychic automatism, by which an attempt is made to express either verbally or in writing, or in any other manner, the true functioning of thought'.²⁶

Inspired by the Abstract Expressionists' disregard for traditional techniques and materials and their desire to capture the unconscious and the spontaneous on canvas, Trusttun followed their lead, and strove to paint unhindered.

During the early 1960s, Trusttun discovered his own synthesis of figuration and abstraction. Inspired by De Kooning, Trusttun painted large, and informally arranged compositions in heavy impasto. Eleven years on, and continuing into the 1980s, the artist abandoned the usual painters' tools of

easel, palette, brushes, etc., to use whatever he chose. Opting to become more involved in the painting process, he began to work with large sheets of unstretched canvas. Working with the canvas on the floor enabled Trusttun to literally be 'in the painting'. Using paint directly on canvas, without prior planning Trusttun intended to expose both thought and working processes. Akin to Pollock's manner of painting, Trusttun has 'no fears about making changes, destroying the image, etc., because the painting has a life of its own'.²⁷

Abstract Expressionism involved two distinctly different styles: 'Gestural' and 'Colour-field' abstraction. The 'Colour-field' artists favoured a cooler, quieter and relatively anonymous execution. Of the two groups Trusttun is affected largely by the visual impact and techniques of 'Gestural' abstraction.

What is true is that Trusttun is a New Zealand artist influenced by international 'Expressionist' styles. What is ambiguous is that this influence does not include their theories, symbolism, or attitudes. For example, he has not adopted the *Brücke* Expressionist painters' 'self-image as the outsider, the alienated, the critic, and the mocker of society'.²⁸ To say Trusttun is an 'expressionist' artist is not only too general, it also gives his art the wrong connotations by obscuring his optimism, and excluding other major facets of his stylistic development. To say he is a New Zealand 'abstract expressionist' would be truer to his art and attitude than the label 'expressionist', but, like most art-historical definitions, placing the artist under either label fails to reveal the extent of his range and diversity.

After his 'expressionist' activities during the early 1960s, his style became quieter, more surreal. Then in 1968 his works were lyrical, delicate and abstracted to the point of being minimal. In 1972, and again in 1986, Trusttum's style changed dramatically as he produced Rauschenberg and Oldenburg-inspired constructions and assemblages in mixed media and in canvas. In 1976, 1981 and 1982 he explored the possibilities of collage and the cut-out, the later works deconstructed and reconstructed in a pre-determined arrangement. In 1983 the artist combined the cut-out and collage with mixed media and acrylic on unstretched canvas to produce unformed, unconventional 'portraiture'. Then intermittently between 1987 and 1990, he developed delicate, linear, and subdued surfaces.

Obviously, the label 'expressionist' is not an adequate one to pin on Philip Trusttum and his art. While it may embrace certain characteristics of his style, the definition unfortunately fails to capture the artist as a whole.

A more recent attempt to provide Trusttum with a stylistic identity within the context of New Zealand art is Michael Dunn's use of the label 'Neo-Expressionism'. Dunn has observed that Expressionism was slow to appear in New Zealand, 'so slow that it could be argued that the works of painters such as Rudi Gopas, Philip Clairmont or Jeffrey Harris were really neo-expressionist'.²⁹

Pablo Picasso has been hailed as the forerunner of German, Italian, and American Neo-Expressionist art. Kim Levin reported that 'one art journalist went so far as to say that without Picasso's last works, Neo-Expressionism would have been unthinkable'.³⁰ The Expressionist revival in West Germany

had its start as early as the 1960s, though it was not noticed much outside Berlin. During the 1970s New York painters tired of the 'puritan reticence and stringency'³¹ of Conceptualism and Minimalism, warmly welcomed this painterly and figurative European style.

According to Michael Dunn, the term 'Neo-Expressionism' implies an awareness of expressionist styles in France and Germany from the time of Van Gogh and the contemporary artists' 'conscious choice' to 'align' with those 'styles and attitudes deriving from it'.³² Marking a return to a figurative and informal handling of paint, stylistically, Trusttum fits comfortably within this category. Because out of all the 'expressionist' labels, Neo-Expressionism allows more scope for individuality and places the New Zealand painter in a contemporary national context, alongside Rudolf Gopas, Patrick Hanly, Tony Fomison, Alistair Nisbett-Smith, Philip Clairmont, Jeffrey Harris, and Philippa Blair.

Although Trusttum's art is more whimsical and optimistic than his 'neo-expressionist' contemporaries', the label would be sufficient as providing an informed introduction to his work if the artist had not also been described as lacking an individual stylistic identity. Brett Riley declared in 1982 that, 'if there is one constant in all of Trusttum's work it is his lack of a consistent personal style'.³³

Artistic style can be defined as a personal combination of lines, colours and designs, or a blend of outside influences that have appeared constantly over a period of time, and as a result have become identified with an individual artist. In the catalogue, *Philip Trusttum Selected Works 1962-1979*, Peter

Leech describes style as 'the manner and structure of painterly patterns which - rather roughly - identify, say the artistic hand of Matisse'.³⁴ To assume, therefore that Trusttun is 'style-less', is to presume that the 'artistic hand' of Trusttun cannot be identified. It appears that critics and art historians have arrived at this conclusion because Trusttun's style, or method of approach, has changed frequently throughout his career. These stylistic shifts drew Peter Leech to comment in 1980 that, 'what is centrally true of Trusttun's art over the years is that it has never become bound to anything recognisable as a Trusttun style'.³⁵

Because Trusttun has no single, consistently recognisable style it has been assumed that he must not have one. Although the claim that Trusttun is 'style-less' is not restrictive or selective, it is still vague and unhelpful, uncovering no more about the artist than is already known. Instead, it implies that Trusttun does not have an individual approach to the two-dimensional canvas that he can claim as his own after thirty years of original work, and that he darts about aimlessly with no sense of purpose. In 1988 Pat Unger also questioned whether Trusttun had a 'style'. 'Is this present work, regional, post-colonial, or yet another variant in the post-Trusttun 'style-without a-style' mode?'³⁶

Obviously confusion surrounds Trusttun and his 'style'. He has 'expressionist' characteristics, but is he a New Zealand 'expressionist', 'abstract expressionist' or a 'neo-expressionist'? He has a vast and varied output that is awkward to define, but his art is not 'style-less'. While it is not necessarily intentional, when considered as a whole the literature on Trusttun does a disservice to his art. Readers are led to believe that he is more inconsistent

and imitative than he really is. They are given the impression that one day he is painting a Hofmann, the next a Van Gogh, a Miró or a Klee. That Trusttum's style is difficult to identify and define cannot be disputed, but perhaps it is our own attitudes and expectations that are the biggest obstacles to our understanding of that art.

To date the conclusions of the literature appear to rest on the assumption that an individual artist should only have one consistent style, a style that is peculiar to that artist alone. Those who believe that Philip Trusttum is an 'expressionist' have tried to find that 'style'. Others, instead of admitting that this may not be possible, declare that he has no style at all. Where is it written that an artist should not change? Who is to say that an artist cannot work in a variety of styles throughout his development? Development is, in fact, defined as a process of change, growth and renewal.

Trusttum is not the only artist to take a dynamic approach to art. Both Matisse and Picasso created a vast range of styles throughout their careers. While they may have been criticised for this at the time, ironically, it is their diversity that is now a celebrated characteristic of their work. While there is sufficient evidence that diversity can and does occur in an individual artist's development, it is, however, still difficult to deal with.

It is obvious that in order to understand Philip Trusttum a number of barriers have to be overcome. We have to reassess our attitudes and rid ourselves of a few pre-conceived notions. Perhaps a search for one 'true' style is not the way to come closer to Trusttum's art. As Gablik observed, this 'spontaneous' and 'swift' artist has no intention of staying with one style for long. If it is not the

artist's intention to find and retain a single style, it should not be the aim of the art historian or critic to find one.

The key to understanding Philip Trusttun as a whole lies in accepting his diversity, not in 'shoe-horning' him into an existing concept. Individual artists and works of art 'are not made to fulfil aesthetic programmes'. As Alan Bowness explains, 'artistic 'movements' are the generalisations of journalists when confronted by the existence of new work that cannot be fitted into any convenient pigeon hole. Such terms survive only because they have a certain historical validity'.³⁷

These labels are certainly helpful when dealing with a collection of artists; but they are not adequate for the individual. With some artists this labelling cannot be done, and it is damaging if attempted. The writer takes control of an artist and pins a label on him/her. If that artist is diverse and experimental any general art historical term is going to neglect some factor or facet of the artist's work. It will thus provide a misleading description that does not, and cannot cover the artist's entire repertoire adequately.

In accepting Trusttun's diversity, therefore, the writer has to remove the temptation to pin him down. Readers for their part must realise that the literature is not going to provide them with a single word to encompass his work, or one particular painting which represents him. As Bronwen Marwick notes: 'Trusttun works in many different directions. He always pushes himself. He's very inventive and creative'.³⁸ Peter Leech also observes that: 'To try to follow any pattern in Trusttun's history as a painter is rather like engaging in a paper chase'.³⁹

Trusttum is comparable to artists like Matisse, Picasso and Dubuffet in output and variety. For the sake of order and understanding it could be argued that, like the experimental leaders of modern art, Trusttum, too, has progressed through a number of 'distinct phases'. Each of these phases represents an individual style that in hindsight can be linked only to Trusttum. Trusttum's styles cannot be confused with those of Fomison, Clairmont or Nisbett-Smith.

Though he is a diverse artist with no consistent linear development - when his art is loosely divided into phases, concentrating on major stylistic shifts - there are certain distinctive characteristics that remain constant throughout.

Between 1961 and 1964 Trusttum's style was spontaneous, seemingly uncontained and abstract. The work that best exemplifies this is *Woman* (1965), a variety of hues and consistencies merge to create a woman's figure, producing a successful blend of freedom with form.

Following 1965, and up to 1972, Trusttum found that it was time to contain his youthful vivacity and develop technical control. The outcome of this decision was an abstracted glowing, meticulous style which culminated in his c 1969 painting *The Battle Plan for Genghis Khan* (pl. 5). With this work the artist combined the sparse with the minutely detailed on a large scale.

By 1972, unhappy with his progression thus far, Trusttum turned to the 'Constructions'(pl. 9). These informal assemblages of found objects, however, failed to utilise the creative and technical abilities he had acquired over the past

ten years to the fullest. Further dissatisfaction resulted in a return to the two-dimensional in 1973. Although the artist was too obviously inspired by Van Gogh and Matisse, a more personal example from this phase is *Interior and Hedge* (1974), where Trusttum combines the two influences successfully.

After five years of experimentation, Trusttum's style became more individual and his lyrical vitality returned, in paintings like *Museum Miró* (1976) and *Ticket* (1978) (pl. 17), though this time on a larger scale.

During 1981 and 1982 Trusttum experimented with faceted collages. The canvas collages utilised his colour sense and his ability to work on immense scales, but on the whole the complete technical process was too disciplined for Trusttum.

With the *Book of Dreams* (1984) (pl. 23) his method and style were free, unconventional, and individual. Creating a personal, informative and joyful approach to portraiture using collage and other tangible materials, Trusttum's presentation was child-like and honest. The artist's development between 1983 and 1985 was, however, again 'hit and miss', some works appeared muddy and cluttered, others empty and unresolved. His technical facility with the brush and paint was lost on many of these canvases because of the very haphazard nature he sought.

From 1986 and into 1990 his interest in living forms continued. Using acrylic on unstretched canvas he revived many of the technical discoveries he had made prior to 1980. With an entire surface coverage alternating between a subdued and open canvas and a tapestry of warm colours, the artist

emphasised line and limited recession. His style moved from the detailed tracery of *Jewelled Horse* (c.1987-88) (pl. 28), to the print-like solidity of *Untitled (Cropping Horse Studies)* (1987) (pl. 27).

After further exploration Trusttum's style became more naive, his forms were distorted but not abstracted, his treatment scumbled and linear. With works like *Glimpse* (1990) (pl. 35) Trusttum's canvas is exciting to explore. In this whimsical composition the artist has combined paint with natural materials successfully, utilizing his ability to manipulate a variety of hues and textures. Retaining many of the qualities developed over the past thirty years, particularly spontaneity, freedom, warmth and surprise, Trusttum had 'evolved' a subtle yet child-like style.

This overview of his stylistic concerns from 1960 to 1990 reveals that even though materials, techniques, methods and influences vary, regardless of his diversity and experimentation there are continuities. Peter Leech's concept of the artist's 'signature' could perhaps be useful here. Because Trusttum is too 'diffuse and discontinuous as an artist'⁴⁰ Leech claimed to be unable to find a Trusttum 'style', he sought instead to find what he describes as a 'signature': 'Despite the absence of style' Leech noted, 'there is no mistaking these works as other than Trusttum's. It is not style which prevails, one wants to say, but signature'.⁴¹

This 'signature' is something other than a personal combination of lines, colours and patterns: it is an underlying psychology, an 'unruliness of spirit and clutter' unique to Trusttum. These are qualities that Leech asserts cannot be reproduced because they go much deeper than 'style'. Leech points out that

artists with recognisable personal styles risk losing their identity, 'contemplate here how relatively easy it would be to forge a McCahon or Hotere; and how very hard it would be to forge a Trusttun'.⁴²

Leech however, is still seeking a single identifiable Trusttun style, and because he fails to find this he contends that Trusttun has no style, only 'signature'. In fact, Trusttun has many styles, all of which are united by this underlying 'signature', all possessing the common characteristics of freedom, energy and optimism.

A contemporary prolific artist is always one step ahead of any written account of his work. Any definition, therefore, of Philip Trusttun's development and stylistic interests cannot be final and restrictive. The intention is instead to provide one of New Zealand's foremost contemporary painters with an individual art-historical identity that dispels current misconceptions and confusion. An identity that not only places him within the wider New Zealand context, but one that accepts and encompasses the range and diversity of his work from the 1960s through to the beginning of the 1990s.

Philip Trusttun is not a Realist, nor is he a hard-edged geometric abstract artist. His work always relates to the natural, visual world, either through his images, or through the titles he gives to his paintings. There are no complex theories behind his works. Stylistically, Trusttun avoids calculation and control, caution and restraint, and above all an anonymous execution.

An examination of Trusttun's stylistic development has revealed in hindsight that this dynamic artist can be identified and defined. This cannot be done,

however, by forcing him into a pre-existing art-historical category, but by identifying him as an individual and defining him as such. Having found the dominant characteristics of his art, a general description of his output can be provided. What Trusttun has developed and retained over the past thirty years could be described as a whimsical, painterly, informal, semi-abstract style.

Within the New Zealand art historical context Philip Trusttun describes himself as a 'loner'.⁴³ Aside from the 'dynamic but thorny stimulus offered by the ever questioning Gopas',⁴⁴ Trusttun was not affected by New Zealand's artistic background, nor by his artist contemporaries. He 'showed little or no interest' in Canterbury's regionalist landscape tradition. Michael Dunn recently described Trusttun's art as 'outward looking and assertively international in feel'.⁴⁵

In 1975, however, Dunn observed that the individual New Zealand artist's desire to catch up to international developments had become a national trend. As a result there occurred a:

striking diversity in New Zealand painting . . . compared with the situation even ten years ago. The days are gone when New Zealand painting could be categorized with a few glib phrases. Artistic interests relate to international trends more than to a strictly national situation.⁴⁶

Because of the freedom of Trusttun's approach to painting, and due to the fact that New Zealand art is more a collection of individuals pursuing their own course, Trusttun's position within this open artistic context is alongside those artists born in the 1940s and educated during the 1960s, who experienced

similar developments and changes in the arts and art education. He belongs with those who derive inspiration from their day-to-day experiences and surroundings, with those whose techniques and methods are inspired by international art and whose styles exist somewhere between figuration and abstraction. Among these artists are Gretchen Albrecht (prior to 1970), Alistair Nisbett-Smith, Rob Taylor, Philip Clairmont and Philippa Blair. All of these artists at some stage of their careers have, like Truitt, assimilated and developed a personal and emotional blend of gestural, international styles.

ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER SIX

1. Gil Docking, *Two Hundred Years of New Zealand Painting* (Wellington, 1971), p.198.
2. Suzi Gablik, 'New Zealand Report: Art People'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.23, 1982, p.14.
3. Mark Young, *New Zealand Art: Painting 1950-1967* (Wellington, 1968), p.5.
4. *ibid.*
5. See n. 1.
6. Peter Cape, *New Zealand Painting Since 1960: A Study in Themes and Developments* (Auckland, 1979), p.55.
7. Elva Bett, *New Zealand Art: A Modern Perspective* (Auckland, 1986), p.48.
8. Michael Dunn, *A Concise History of New Zealand Painting* (Auckland, 1991), p.127.
9. *ibid.*, p.128.
10. Jim and Mary Barr, *Philip Clairmont* (Wanganui, 1987), p.62.
11. 'J. T.', 'Focus on Aigantighe: Philip Trusttun'. *The Timaru Herald*, 11 January 1986.
12. Peter Leech, 'Style and Signature: The Paintings of Philip Trusttun'. *Philip Trusttun: Selected Works 1962-1979* (Wanganui, 1980), p.18.
13. John Hurrell, 'Trusttun's drawings'. *The Press*, 15 August 1984, p.31.
14. See n. 1, p.196.
15. Alan Bowness, *Modern European Art* (London, 1972), p.87.
16. *ibid.*
17. Nikos Stangos (ed.), *Concepts of Modern Art* (London, 1974 - revised edition, 1981), p.30.
18. See n. 15, p.103
19. See n. 17, p.43.
20. Katherine J. Furniss, Rudolf Gopas (1913-1983), Masters Thesis, Art History, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 1987, p.5.
21. Leone Stewart, 'Open house at No.34 Berry Street'. *The Press*, 12 February 1977, p.8.
22. See n. 8, p.128.
23. Derek Schulz, 'Everyday Optimism'. *New Zealand Listener*, 6 December 1980, p.36.
24. See n. 8, p.128.

25. See n. 23.
26. Edward Lucie-Smith, *Movements in Art Since 1945* (London, 1984), p.25.
27. *ibid.*, p.34.
28. See n. 8, p.123.
29. *ibid.*
30. Kim Levin, *Beyond Modernism: essays on art from the '70s and '80s* (New York, 1988), p.152.
31. Edward Lucie-Smith, *Art in the 'Eighties* (New York, 1990), p.56.
32. See n. 8, p.123.
33. Brett Riley, 'Trusttūm'. *The Christchurch Star*, 19 May 1982.
34. See n. 12.
35. *ibid.*
36. Pat Unger, 'Philip Trusttūm'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.49, 1988, p.36.
37. See n. 15.
38. Lee Harris, 'Taking art to people'. *The Otago Daily Times*, 27 April 1990.
39. Peter Leech, 'A game for the living'. *The Otago Daily Times*, 12 August 1982.
40. See n. 12.
41. *ibid.*
42. *ibid.*
43. Hazel Menehira, 'An artist whose colour 'sings''. *The Wanganui Chronicle*, 24 October 1980.
44. Larry Finn, 'Major exhibition of Trusttūm art'. *The Daily News*, 18 July 1981.
45. See n. 8, p.128.
46. Michael Dunn, *Figurative Art Now: 9 New Zealand Artists* (Auckland, 1975), p.5.

CONCLUSION

'It takes a while just to find self'.¹

(Philip Trusttun, 1980)

Philip Trusttun is a painterly, informal, semi-abstract New Zealand painter. Throughout his career he has experimented with many different techniques, methods and materials, and has worked through a variety of influences as he sought to discover a personal identity in his art.

Trusttun's career is marked by continual growth and renewal. In 1982 critic Peter Leech observed that 'Trusttun thinks of art as a game to be played'.² Believing it should be enjoyed, the artist has never been afraid of breaking the rules. The end result of this conviction was that over the years Trusttun's output has the appearance of being somewhat 'hit and miss'.³ He has not been selective in what he exhibits, and, although this tends to reveal his weaknesses it also highlights his strengths.

In an evolution which involves much trial and error, some works are naturally more resolved. At times the artist has followed the leaders of modern art too closely, possibly exhibiting works that belong to a stage of 'discovery and learning', rather than showing only examples that had absorbed and transformed these influences. However, as is pointed out by Leone Stewart in 1977, 'Philip Trusttun makes no claim to be an innovator in the painting sphere',⁴ he is instead a questioning painter. Frequently changing his styles throughout his development, the period from 1960 to 1990 was a time of

searching, seeking and exploring different methods, assimilating influences, adopting, adapting, re-working and discovering new styles.

Trusttun is one of New Zealand's most impulsive and intuitive artists. With no pattern to his development except for a trend of lively exuberance, there is no telling what Trusttun will do next, or in which direction he will proceed. His tendency to experiment and his industrious nature make even the artist's media unpredictable.

The current description of Trusttun as a painterly, informal, semi-abstract painter, therefore applies only to his work from 1960 to 1990. It is best to observe this ever changing artist's progression one step at a time. As Graham Reid found in 1986 - and this is equally applicable to 1990 - 'Philip Trusttun has always scrupulously reassessed himself, always been an artist in the process of becoming. Where he takes these current ideas will be worth careful attention'.⁵

One thing is certain, Trusttun is determined to continue his painting:

I see everything, including art through art. Painting is my way to salvation. By fair means or foul - paint - that is my world.⁶

ENDNOTES FOR CONCLUSION.

1. Peter Leech, 'Style and signature: The paintings of Philip Trusttum'. *Philip Trusttum: Selected works 1962-1979* (Wanganui, 1980), p. 24.
2. Peter Leech, 'A game for the living'. *The Otago Daily Times*, 12 August 1982.
3. John Hurrell, 'Trusttum's drawings'. *The Press*, 15 August 1984, p. 31.
4. Leone Stewart, 'Open house at No. 34 Berry Street'. *The Press*, 12 February 1977.
5. Graham Reid, 'Stretching the real'. *New Zealand Listener*, 27 September 1986, p. 59.
6. Pat Unger, 'Philip Trusttum'. *Art New Zealand*, vol 49, 1988, p. 37.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Unpublished Manuscripts, Papers and Letters.

Baverstock, William S. Papers: 1880-1975, Archives Collection,
University of Canterbury, Christchurch.

Catchpole, Julie. The Group, Masters Thesis, Art History, University of
Canterbury, Christchurch, 1984.

Furniss, Katherine J. Rudolf Gopas (1913-1983), Masters Thesis, Art
History, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 1987.

Marwick, Ross. Painting: A Study of Philip Trusttun, Fine Arts
(Honours), University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 1970.

Ross, James. Philip Trusttun: A Brief Chronolgy, National Art Gallery,
Research Collection, Wellington, c.1974.

Taylor, H. J. transcript of interview with Philip Trusttun, 4 September
1990.

Trusttun, Philip. reply to letter from H. J. Taylor, 29 April 1991.

Trusttun, Philip. reply to letter from H. J. Taylor, 17 January 1992.

Books and Catalogues.

Alloway, Lawrence. *American Pop Art* Collier/MacMillan, (London,
1974).

ANZART 1984 (catalogue), Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New
Zealand, (Wellington, 1984), pp:86-89.

Barr, Jim and Mary. *Philip Clairmont* (catalogue), Sarjeant Gallery,
(Wanganui, 1987).

- - *When Art Hits the Headlines: A Survey of Controversial art in New Zealand* (catalogue), National Art Gallery, (Wellington, 1987).
- - *Rudolf Gopas* (catalogue), Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, (New Plymouth, 1982).
- Bett, Elva. *New Zealand Art: A Modern Perspective* Reed Methuen, (Auckland, 1986).
- Bieringa, Luit. *Content/Context: A Survey of Recent New Zealand Art 1986* National Art Gallery, (Wellington, 1986).
- Bowness, Alan. *Modern European Art* Thames and Hudson, (London, 1972).
- Brown, Gordon H. *New Zealand Painting 1920-1940: Adaptation and Nationalism* (catalogue), Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand, (Wellington, 1975).
- - *New Zealand Painting 1940-1960: Conformity and Dissension* (catalogue), Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand, (Wellington, 1981).
- Brown, Gordon H. and Hamish Keith. *An Introduction to New Zealand Painting 1839-1980* Collins, (Auckland, 1982).
- Bucci, Mario. *Miro: Twentieth-Century Masters* Hamlyn, (New York, 1970).
- Caldwell, Elizabeth. *The Many Faces of Trusttun* (catalogue), Aigantighe Art Gallery, (Timaru, 1989).
- Cape, Peter. *New Zealand Painting Since 1960: A Study in Themes and Developments* Collins, (Auckland, 1979).
- Cooper, Douglas. *Paul Klee* Penguin Books, (Middlesex, 1949).
- de la Croix, Horst, and Richard G. Tansey. *Gardner's Art Through the Ages* (seventh edition), Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, (New York, 1980).

- Docking, Gil. *Two Hundred Years of New Zealand Painting* A. H. and A. W. Reed, (Wellington, 1971).
- *Two Hundred Years of New Zealand Painting* David Bateman, (Wellington, 1971 - enlarged Michael Dunn - Auckland, 1990).
- Dunn, Michael. *Figurative Art Now: 9 New Zealand Artists.* (catalogue), Barrington Gallery, Auckland, March, 1975.
- *The University of Auckland Art Collection* (catalogue), University of Auckland, (Auckland, 1983).
- *A Concise History of New Zealand Painting* David Bateman, (Auckland, 1991).
- Everitt, Anthony. *Abstract Expressionism* Thames and Hudson, (London, 1975).
- Flam, Jack. *Matisse: The Man and His Art 1869-1918* Thames and Hudson, (London, 1986).
- Gardner, W. J. *A History of the University of Canterbury 1873-1973* University of Canterbury, (Christchurch, 1973).
- Giedion-Welcker, Carola. *Paul Klee* Faber and Faber, (London, 1952).
- Haley, Russell. *Hanly: A New Zealand Artist* Hodder and Stoughton, (Auckland, 1989).
- Jaffe, Hans L. *Klee: Twentieth-Century Masters* Hamlyn, (New York, 1972).
- Janson, H. W. *History of Art* (third edition), Harry N. Abrams, (New York, 1986).
- Kandinsky, Wassily. *Concerning the Spiritual in Art and Painting in Particular* Wittenborn, (New York, 1947).
- Keith, Hamish. *The Development of Art in New Zealand* (lectures), (c.1965).

- - *New Zealand Painting 1965* (catalogue), (Auckland 1965).

- Kubicková, Vera. *Persian Miniatures* Spring Books, (London).

- Lambert, Jean-Clarence. *Karel Appel: Works on Paper* Abbeville Press, (New York, 1980).

- - *Cobra* Sotheby Publications, (London, 1983).

- Late Picasso: Paintings, Sculpture, Drawings, Prints, 1953-1972* The Tate Gallery, (London, 1988).

- Levin, Kim. *Beyond Modernism: essays on art from the '70s and '80s* Harper and Row, (New York, 1988).

- Lucie-Smith, Edward. *Movements in Art Since 1945* (new revised edition), Thames and Hudson, (London, 1984).

- - *Art in the 'Eighties* Phaidon, (New York, 1990).

- McLeod, A. L. (ed.) *The Pattern of New Zealand Culture* Cornell University Press, (New York, 1968).

- McLeod, William T. (ed.) *The Collins Paperback English Dictionary* Collins, (London 1986).

- Milbank, Bill. *Philip Trusttum: Selected Works 1962-1979* (catalogue), Sarjeant Gallery, (Wanganui, 1980).

- - *The Art of Horsemanship* (catalogue), Sarjeant Gallery, (Wanganui, 1989).

- - *The Sarjeant's Trusttums* (catalogue), Sarjeant Gallery, (Wanganui, 1991).

- - *Trusttum: From Living* (catalogue), Sarjeant Gallery, (Wanganui, 1991).

- Myers, Bernard S. *Expressionism: A Generation in Revolt* Thames and Hudson, (London, 1963).

- N.Z.N.Y.* (catalogue), 22 Wooster Street Gallery, (New York, 1985).
- Paul Klee 1879-1940* (catalogue), Auckland City Art Gallery, (Auckland, 1983).
- Philip Trusttum: Subjective Experience 1983/84* Sarjeant Gallery, (Wanganui, 1984).
- Pound, Francis. *Forty Modern New Zealand Paintings* Penguin, (Auckland, 1985).
- Reynolds, Patrick, and Keith Stewart. *The Art Award 15: The Montana Lindauer Art Award 1988* A. S. A. Gallery, (Auckland, 1988).
- Rodari, Florian. *Collage: pasted, cut and torn papers* Rizzoli, (New York, 1988).
- Rosenberg, Harold. *Saul Steinberg* Alfred A. Knopf, Whitney Museum of American Art, (New York, 1978).
- Russell, John. *The World of Matisse 1869-1954* Time Life International, (Nederland, 1977).
- Smith, Bernard. *Australian Painting: 1788-1970* Oxford University Press, (Melbourne, 1971).
- Stangos, Nikos. (ed.) *Concepts of Modern Art* Thames and Hudson, (London, 1974 - revised edition, 1981).
- Tomory, P. A. (ed.) *Painting 1827-1967* Reed, (Wellington, 1968).
- - *Contemporary Painting in New Zealand* Auckland City Art Gallery, Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council, (Auckland, 1965).
- Woollaston, M. T. *Sage Tea: An Autobiography* Collins, (Auckland, 1980).

Magazines and Journals.

'Art in Post-Primary Schools'. *The Arts in New Zealand*, September / October, vol. 17, no. 5, September/October, 1945, pp.10-12.

Barnett, Gerald. 'From Living: Philip Trusttun at the Sarjeant'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.60, 1991, pp. 66-69.

Bell, Leonard. 'Sydney Biennale: showing the way out'. *New Zealand Listener*, 12 June 1982, pp. 36-37.

Blackley, Roger and Peter Wells. 'The 4th Biennale of Sydney: New Zealanders in Australia'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.24, 1982, pp.26-31.

Brown, Gordon H. 'Rudolf Gopas, Philip Trusttun, Philip Clairmont'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.13, 1979, pp. 13,57.

- - 'Philip Trusttun: Cars'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.19, 1981, p.12.

Caldwell, Elizabeth. 'Painting: The Many Faces of Trusttun: Philip Trusttun'. *CSA Preview*, July/August, no.147, 1989.

Cape, Peter. 'The Arts in Wellington'. *Arts and Community*, vol.8, no.6, June, 1972, p.12.

Ciaran, Fiona. 'Artists in Glass'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.39, 1985, pp.35-37.

- - 'Beguiling glass'. *New Zealand Listener*, 23 August 1986, p.55.

Coley, John. 'Art: Powerhouse Painter'. *Time Off*, 1973, p.20.

- - 'Philip Trusttun: Totems'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.16, 1980, p.20.

- - 'Philip Trusttun'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.17, 1980, p.17.

Collins, R. D. J. 'Philip Trusttun: 1976 Banner Paintings'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.5, 1977, p.14.

Curnow, Wystan. 'New Zealand Art - where in the world is it?' *New Zealand Listener*, 3 April 1982, pp.34-35.

Dingwall, Richard. 'Wanganui'. *New Zealand Art News*, April/May, 1985, p.8.

Dunn, Michael. 'Gopas remarks on his style and development'. *Artis*, New Vision Gallery, Auckland, vol.1, no.1, 1971.

- - 'Present Performance: Sculpture and Painting'. *Islands*, vol.2, no.4, 1973, pp.369-380.

- - 'Rudolf Gopas: A Teacher and Painter in Retrospect'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.27, 1983, pp.28-32.

Gablik, Suzi. 'New Zealand Report: Art People'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.23, 1982, pp.14-16.

Green, Anthony S. G. 'Philip Trusttun - Auckland Festival Exhibition'. *Arts and Community*, vol.7, no.5, May/June, 1971, p.10.

Hawkes, Sophie. 'Henri Matisse: Jazz'. *Art News*, October, 1983, pp.72-77.

Keith, Hamish. *Eve*, September, 1966, p.14.

Leech, Peter, 'Contemporary Art in Southern Perspective'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.15, 1980, p.19.

- - 'Philip Trusttun: Playing the Game'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.25, 1982, p.17.

- - 'Philip Trusttun: Backhanded Portraits 1983/84'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.31, 1984, p.19.

- - 'Trusttun's Wardrobe: Philip Trusttun at Bosshard Galleries'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.37, 1985, p.22.

- - 'The Feeling of Life: Philip Trusttun's Recent Horseplay'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.47, 1988, pp.36-37.

- McKinnon, Avenal. 'Charles Tole, Ralph Hotere, Gavin Chilcott, Philip Trusttun'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.25, 1982, p.16.
- Plumridge, Libby. 'Celebrating the art school experience'. *New Zealand Listener*, 10 July 1982, pp.34-35.
- Reid, Graham. 'Stretching the real'. *New Zealand Listener*, 27 September 1986, pp.58-59.
- Riley, Brett. 'Closer, closer, closer'. *New Zealand Listener*, 21 April 1984, p.37.
- Ross, James. Philip Trusttun's Paintings of the 'Seventies'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.6, 1977, pp.16-21.
- Schulz, Derek. 'Everyday optimism'. *New Zealand Listener*, 6 December 1980, p.36.
- - 'The Paintings of Philip Trusttun'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.20, 1981, pp.28-29.
- - 'Re-evaluating Gopas'. *New Zealand Listener*, 11 December 1982, p.35.
- Smart, Jonathan. 'Big paintings at the C. S. A'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.37, 1985, pp.21-22.
- Spens, Michael. 'Meaning, Excellence and Purpose: ANZART in Edinburgh'. *Art New Zealand* vol.33, 1983, pp.28-31.
- - 'Monet not Maori: Art in New Zealand'. *Studio International*, vol.198, no.1010, 1985, pp.46-57.
- Taylor, Rob. 'Art: Rob Taylor (Before He Robs You!)'. *Salient*, 1985, p.12.
- Thomas, Geri. 'Lights on The Terrace'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.46, 1987, pp.53-54.
- Tomory, Peter. 'What's Different About New Zealand Art?' (William S. Baverstock: Papers 1880-1975), *New Zealand Listener*, 30 October 1964, pp.3,22.

- - 'Art Can't be Taught'. (William S. Baverstock: Papers 1880-1975), *New Zealand Listener*, 20 November 1964, p.3.

- - 'It Started in the 'Thirties'. (William S. Baverstock: Papers 1880-1975), *Journal of the Canterbury Society of Arts*, no.14, July, 1967.

Unger, Pat. 'Philip Trusttun'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.49, 1988, pp.36- 37.

- - 'Profile: Philip Trusttun'. *C.S.A. Preview*, C.S.A. Gallery, Christchurch, January/February, no.144, 1989.

Webb, Evan. 'The Canterbury School of Art Centenary Celebrations 1882-1982'. *Art New Zealand*, vol.25, 1982, p.15.

Wilson, T. L. Rodney. 'Philip Trusttun: Recent Paintings and Early Works'. *Art New Zealand* vol.10, 1978, p.25.

- - 'Redoubled force'. *New Zealand Listener*, 29 July 1978, pp.28-29.

Newspaper articles and reviews.

Ambler, Corinne. 'Paintings are his diary. . .'. *The Nelson Evening Mail*, 24 January 1990.

Arthur, Garry. 'An artistic rivalry in stained glass'. 'Car tail-light inspired Catholic window'. *The Press*, 28 July 1981, p.21.

Barber, David. 'In new environment'. *The Press*, 4 July 1967, p.13.

Baxter, Cindy. 'Philip Trusttun putting New Zealand on the map'. *The Press*, 4 July 1984, p.20.

Bennett, Paul. 'Trusttun explores horses with paint'. *The Hawkes Bay Herald Tribune*, 12 April 1989.

Brokenshire, David. 'Trusttun on Totems'. *The Press*, 19 May 1980, p.12.

- - 'A feast of visual delights'. *The Press*, 3 June 1982, p.11.

- Bromhead, Peter. 'Forceful, warm but ...'. *The Auckland Star*, 28 May 1975.

- Brown, Gordon H. 'Approach to more ordered outlook'. *The Auckland Star*, 23 April 1969.

- - 'The Trusttium survey'. *The Auckland Star*, 2 March 1981.

- Busby, Anita. 'Gallery wants to become unique'. *The Dominion*, 3 September 1984.

- Caldwell, Elizabeth. 'Focus on Aigantighe: Philip Trusttium'. *The Tamaru Herald*, 20 May 1989.

- Coley, John. 'Trusttium clears out: 20 years' work crowds C.S.A Gallery'. *The Christchurch Star*, 21 May 1980.

- 'D. H.' 'Fireblasts of colour exhibiton feature'. *Taranaki Herald*, 2 July 1981.

- Dunn, Michael. 'Trip that's shock treatment'. *The Sunday Herald*, 28 October 1973.

- The Evening Post*, 'Art based on tennis'. 4 August 1982.

- Finn, Larry. 'Major exhibition of Trusttium art'. *The Daily News*, 18 July 1981.

- Glueck, Grace. 'Philip Trusttium: Kornblee Gallery'. *The New York Times*, 26 October 1984.

- Harris, Lee. 'Taking art to people'. *The Otago Daily Times*, 27 April 1990.

- Hurrell, John. 'Philip Trusttium shows'. *The Press*, 14 March 1984, p.37.

- - 'Trusttium drawings'. *The Press*, 15 August 1984, p.31.

- - 'Trusttum paintings'. *The Press*, 20 August 1985, p.16.
- 'J. T.' 'Focus on Aigantighe: Philip Trusttum'. *The Timaru Herald*, 11 January 1986.
- Keith, Hamish. 'Rich, rare rewards in 3-man show'. *The Auckland Star*, 27 October 1973.
- Leech, Peter. 'Sophistication of Artistic Simplicity'. *The Otago Daily Times*, 19 November 1979.
- - 'Painter, litter and literality'. *The Otago Daily Times*, 14 July 1980.
- - 'A game for the living'. *The Otago Daily Times*, 12 August 1982.
- Lonie, Bridie. 'Trusttum: early works'. *The Otago Daily Times*, 31 October 1983.
- - 'Art pattern and Process'. *The Otago Daily Times*, March 1984.
- Marwick, Ross. 'Trusttum shows recent works'. *The Nelson Evening Mail*, 6 April 1988, p.8.
- McKinnon, Avenal. 'A winner in every set'. *The Evening Post*, 4 August 1982.
- McNamara, T. J. 'Trusttum works explore paint as medium'. *The New Zealand Herald*, 22 April 1969.
- - 'Display of superb paintings - Impressive work by young artist'. *The New Zealand Herald*, 3 May 1971.
- - 'Just one flaw in masterly show'. *The New Zealand Herald*, 18 March 1974.
- - 'Painting with cut paper'. *The New Zealand Herald*, 25 November 1976.
- - 'Trusttum puts colour to brilliant use'. *The New Zealand Herald*, 19 July 1978.

- - 'Busy Trusttun to bring joy'. *The Auckland Herald*, 23 February 1981.
- - 'Artist shows rich colour harmony'. *The New Zealand Herald*, March 2, 1981.
- - 'Putting paintings and photos in perspective'. *The New Zealand Herald*, 4 March 1985.
- - 'Interesting exhibitions bring back life to city'. *The New Zealand Herald* 30 June 1986.

Menehira, Hazel. 'An artist whose colour 'sings''. *The Wanganui Chronicle*, 24 October 1980.

M[offitt], G. T[revor]. 'One man exhibition by Philip Trusttun'. *The Press*, February 23, 1972, p.20.

- - 'Recent paintings by Philip Trusttun'. *The Press*, 13 September 1973.
- - 'Lots of good things to see in the Group show'. *The Press*, 25 September 1973.
- - 'Diverse range in Group show'. *The Press*, 14 September 1974, p.17.

The Nelson Evening Mail. 'Suter has treat in store for lovers of abstract painting'. 17 March 1982, p.19.

The New Zealand Herald. 'Painting is a tightrope but artist tries to keep his balance'. 27 August 1966.

- - 'Art in High Rise'. 20 November 1987.

Oakley, John. 'Contemporary N.Z. show is depressing'. *The Christchurch Star*, (Baverstock Papers: 1880-1975), 1964.

The Otago Daily Times. 'Dead sunflowers'. 5 March 1983.

- - 'Abstract Expressionism'. 26 August 1986.

-- 'Trusttum's abstract art'. 23 March 1987.

The Press. 'Young painter placed among country's best'. 21 December 1965.

-- 'One-man show at Akaroa'. 4 September 1973, p.10.

-- 'City artists build huge stained window'. 24 December 1986.

Riley, Brett. 'Trusttum'. *The Christchurch Star*, May 19, 1982.

-- 'Philip Trusttum: searching for truth'. *The Christchurch Star*, 31 August 1983.

Schulz, Derek. 'Trusttum exhibition covers wide range'. *The Wanganui Herald*, 1 November 1980.

S[impson], H. J. 'Controversial paintings seem innocent enough on home soil'. *The Press*, 12 August 1965.

Simpson, John. 'Group show one of the best of the year'. *The Press*, 3 November 1964.

Simpson, Peter. 'Pushing Fifty' - Philip Trusttum'. *The Press*, 7 February 1991.

Sotheran, Cheryl. 'No title is a title'. *The Auckland Star*, 10 May 1982.

Stewart, Leone. 'Open house at No.34 Berry Street'. *The Press*, 12 February 1977, p.8.

Stradling, Graeme. 'Trusttum up with the best'. *The Nelson Evening Mail*, 8 February 1989.

Taylor, Rob. 'Novel views of house and garden'. *The Dominion*, 18 August 1986.

-- 'Art as an extension of corporate philosophy'. *The Dominion*, 6 October 1988.

Thomas, Michael. 'Exhibitions revitalise Chch art scene'. *The Press*, June 1, 1978, p.12.

- - 'Doodled derivations from an artist's life'. *The Press*, 21 September 1979.

The Timaru Herald. 'Students' art work on show'. 4 November 1988.

Topp, Chris. 'Trusttun gallery combines paintings, fabric, fashion'. *The Press*, 31 October 1990, p.22.

Unger, Pat. 'Trusttun woodcuts'. *The Press*, 5 August 1986, p.23.

- - 'Trusttun's paintings'. *The Press*, 11 October 1986, p.16.

- - 'Philip Trusttun paintings'. *The Press*, 9 August 1988, p.19.

- - 'Faces of Trusttun'. *The Press*, 20 July 1989, p.15.

The Wanganui Chronicle. 'Raetihi-born artist faces bright future'. 13 July 1984.

- - 'Exhibition full of surprises'. 2 March 1989.

The Wanganui Herald. 'Gallery may miss out on paintings'. 10 April 1984.

- - 'Debate healthy, says artist'. 13 July 1984.

The Weekly News. 'A painting should sing out life,' says young artist'. 5 October 1966.

W[ilson], T. L. R[odney]. 'Trusttun in transition'. *The Press*, 10 April 1975.

Young, Mark. 'Dream land of innocence, joy'. *The Auckland Star*, 26 August 1966.

Television programmes and tape recordings.

D'Audney, Angela. Interview with Quentin MacFarlane, 'Canterbury School of Fine Arts', *Kaliedoscope*. Television New Zealand, 4 June 1982.

D'Audney, Angela. Interview with Philip Trusttun, 'Canterbury School of Fine Arts', *Kaliedoscope*. Television New Zealand, 4 June 1982.

Grant, Liz. 'Stained Glass: Philip Trusttun, Ben Hanly and Suzanne Johnson'. *Kaliedoscope*. Television New Zealand, 20 November 1987.

Perkins, Simon. Interviews with Peter Leech, Philip Trusttun, and Lee Trusttun, (tape recording), 1990.

Ross, James. Interview with Philip Trusttun, (tape recording), c.1977.

Other.

Philip Trusttun (pamphlet), New Vision Gallery, Auckland, April / May, 1969.

Philip Trusttun: Banners 1976. (information sheet), Bosshard Galleries, Dunedin, 1 -18 March 1976.

Philip Trusttun (invitation), New Vision Gallery, Auckland, July / August, 1977.

Philip Trusttun (invitation), C.S.A. Gallery, Christchurch, 13 May 1980.

Philip Trusttun: Solo Exhibition. (information sheet), Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North, c.1984.

Philip Trusttun: Working. (information sheet), Brooke/Gifford Gallery, Christchurch, July / August 1990.

Smith, Campbell. Philip Trusttun. (information sheet), Waikato Museum of Art and History, Hamilton, 28 February 1985.

University of Canterbury, School of Fine Arts, *Prospectus* (Christchurch, 1962).

CATALOGUE OF WORKS 1962-1990.

(All measurements are in millimetres, height before width).



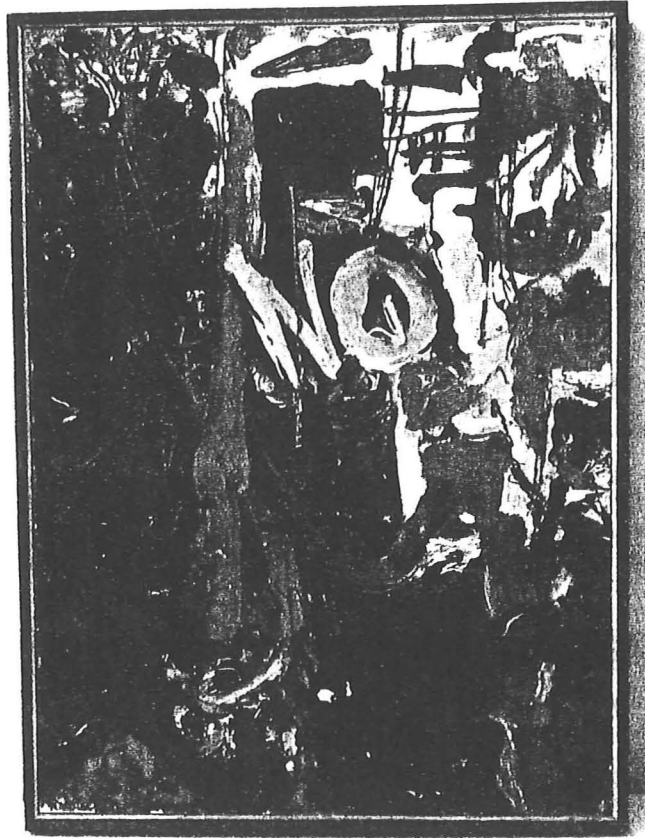
¹ Ashley Paintings 850 x 450

1962

Oil on board

The Trusttun Loan Collection

Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui.



2.No 763 x 562

c.1964-65

Oil on paper on board

Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth



3. Woman 2425 x 1206
1965
P. V. A. and oil on hardboard
National Art Gallery, Wellington.

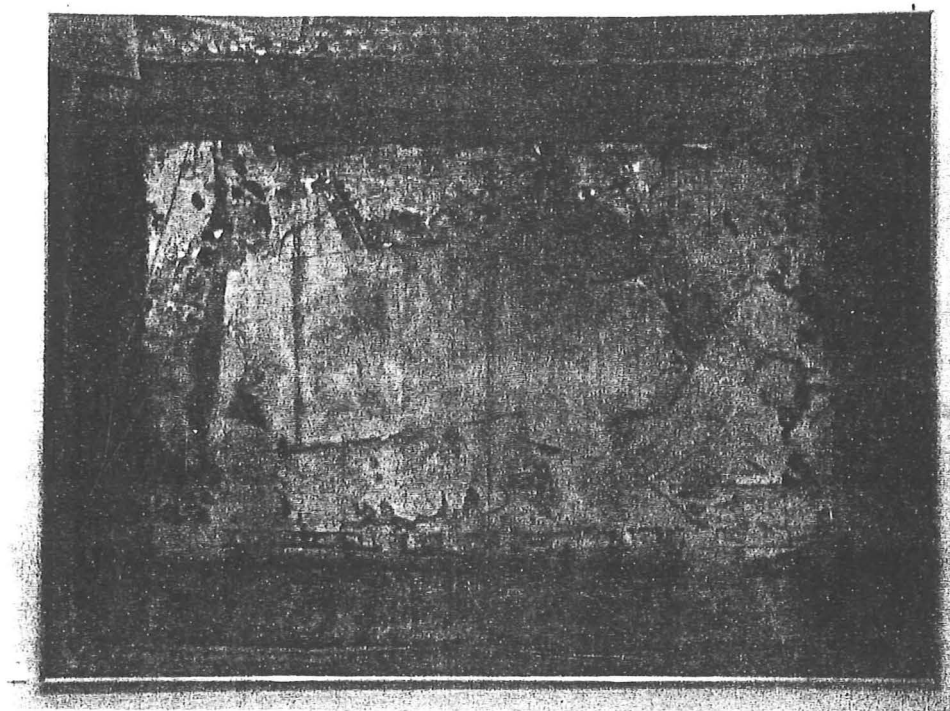


⁴.Martin's Playtime 1820 x 1210

1966

Oil on hardboard

Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui.



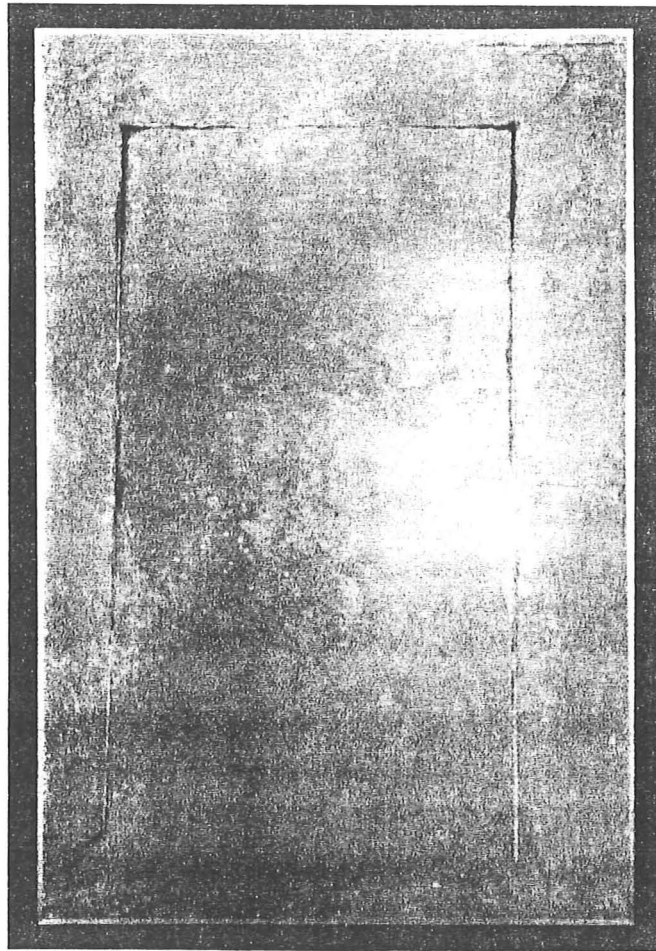
⁵The Battle Plan for Genghis Khan

1824 x 2440

c.1968-69

Oil on chipboard

Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui.



⁶The Green Fireplace (No.4) 1830 x 1220

1969

Oil on board

Waikato Museum of Art and History, Hamilton.

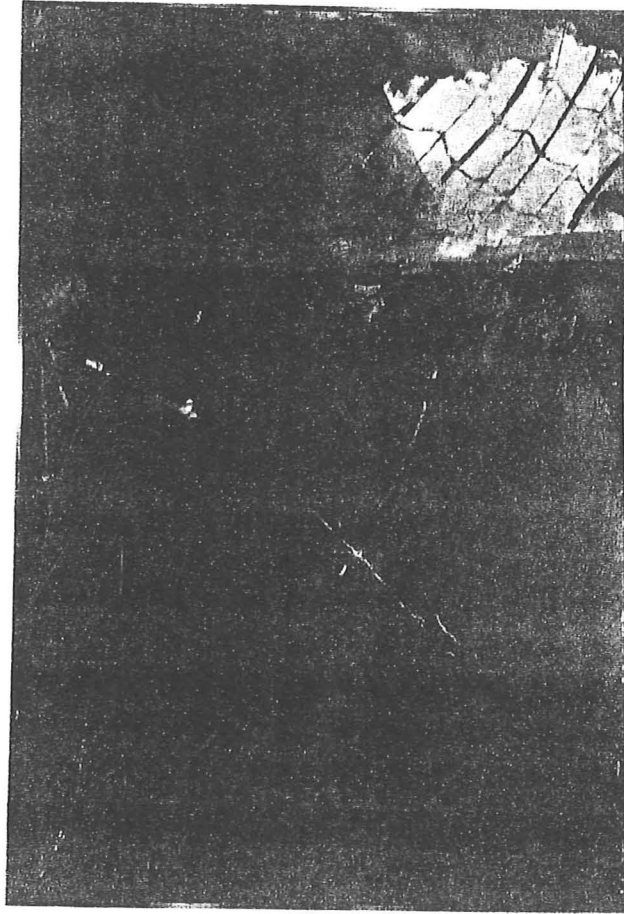


⁷Flower 1362 x 982

1970

Acrylic on board

Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui.

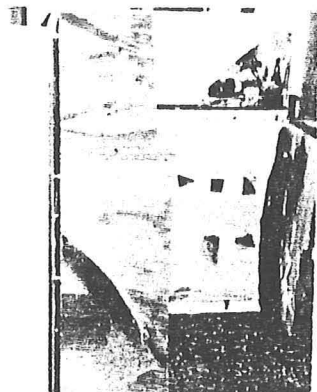
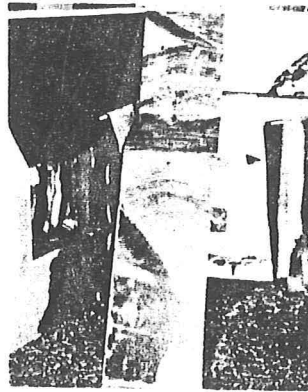
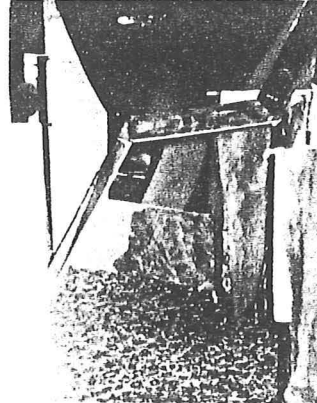
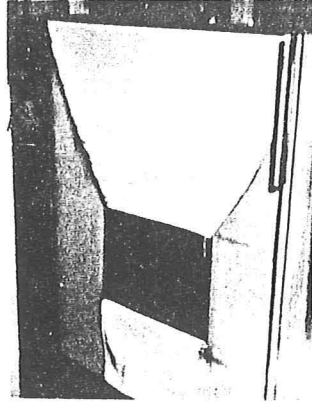


8.Curtain 1440 x 980

c.1970-71

Oil on chipboard

Private Collection.



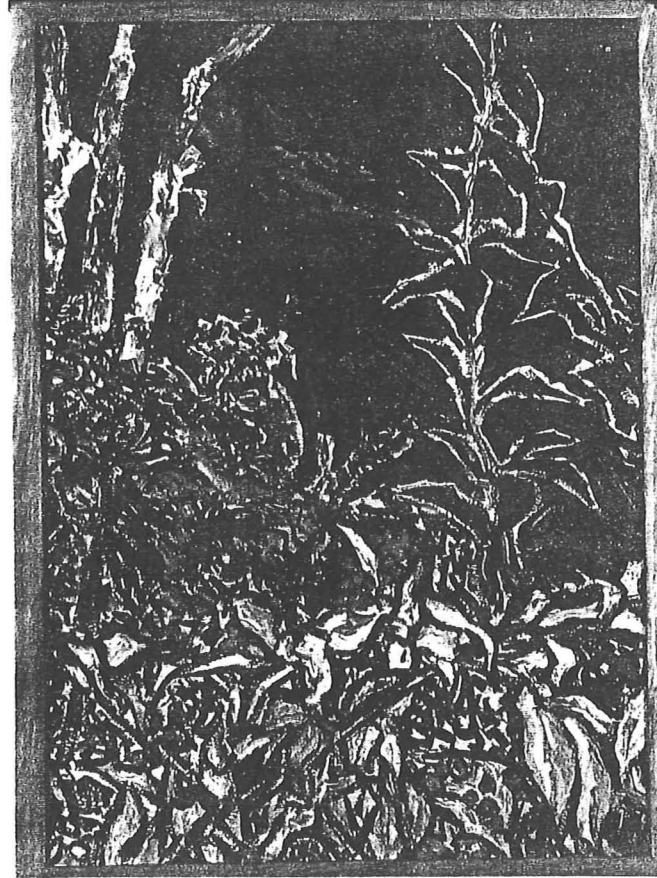
⁹The Constructions

1972

Mixed media

Photo panels from slides

Philip Trusttum.



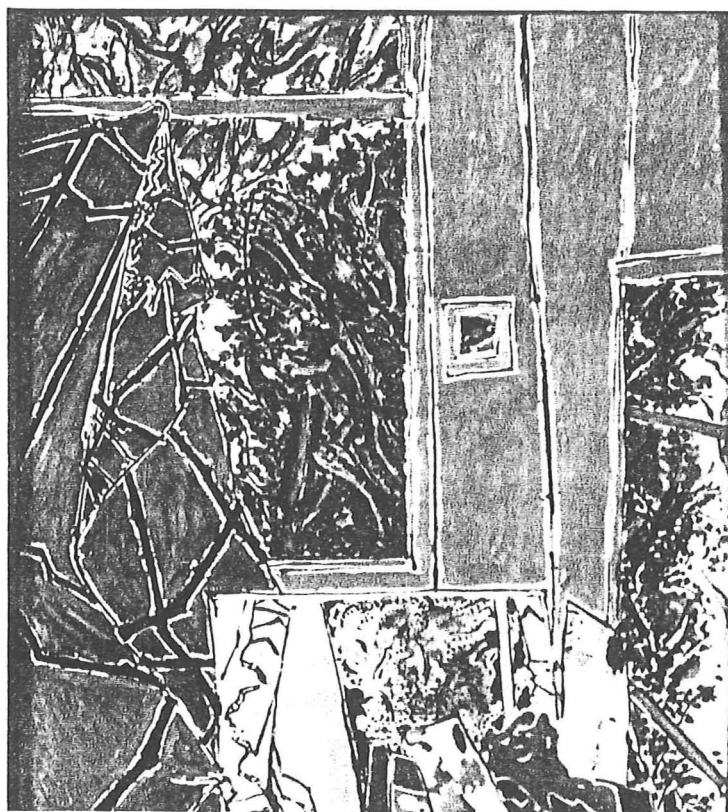
¹⁰Red Berries and Blue Sky

1220 x 885

1973

Oil on chipboard

Private Collection.



¹¹.Interior and Hedge

1360 x 1210

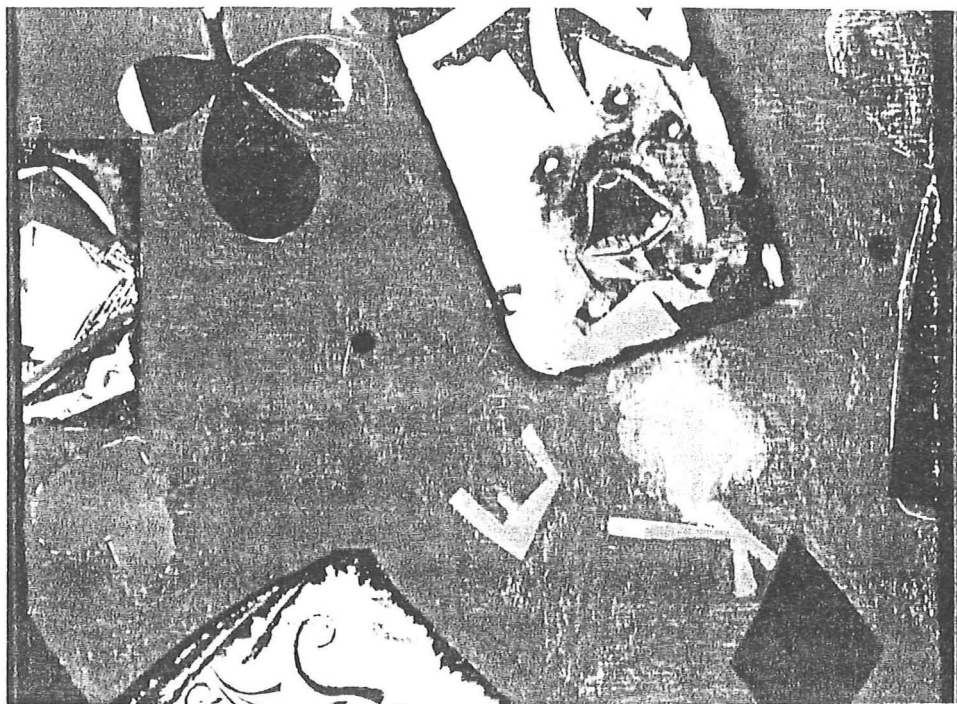
c.1974

oil on hardboard

Waikato Museum of Art and History, Hamilton.



¹².Hannah on the Rocking Horse 1990 x 1210
1974 -
Oil on board
Aigantighe Art Gallery, Timaru.



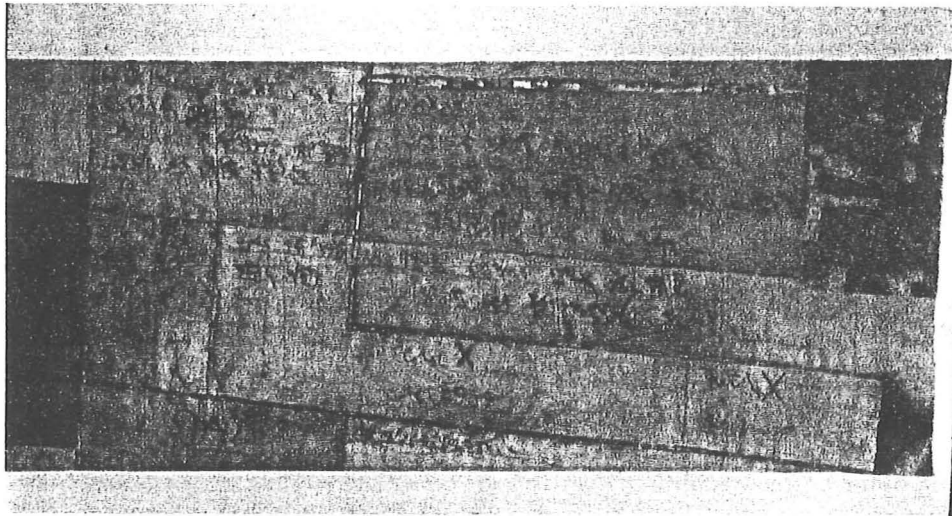
¹³Joker

1365 x 1648

1975

Oil on hardboard

Auckland City Art Gallery, Auckland.

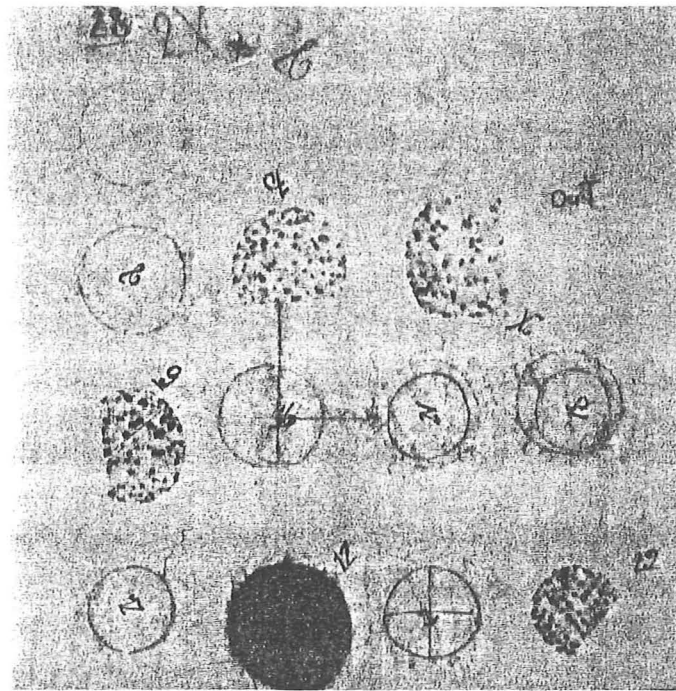


¹⁴Homage to Avis 1960 x 4228

1976

Acrylic on unstretched canvas

Private Collection.



¹⁵Patience II 1800 x 1800

1976

Acrylic on unstretched canvas

National Art Gallery, Wellington.

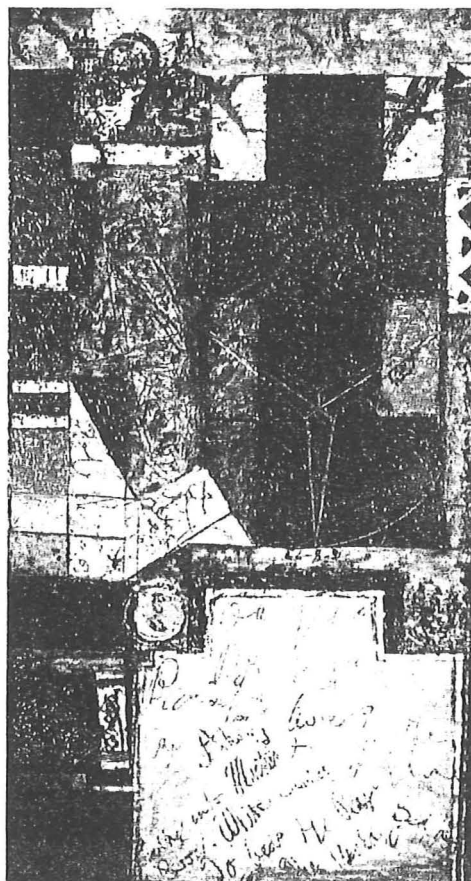


¹⁶Hannah Off to School at the Age of Five 2765x1875

c.1976-77

Acrylic on unstretched canvas

Private Collection.



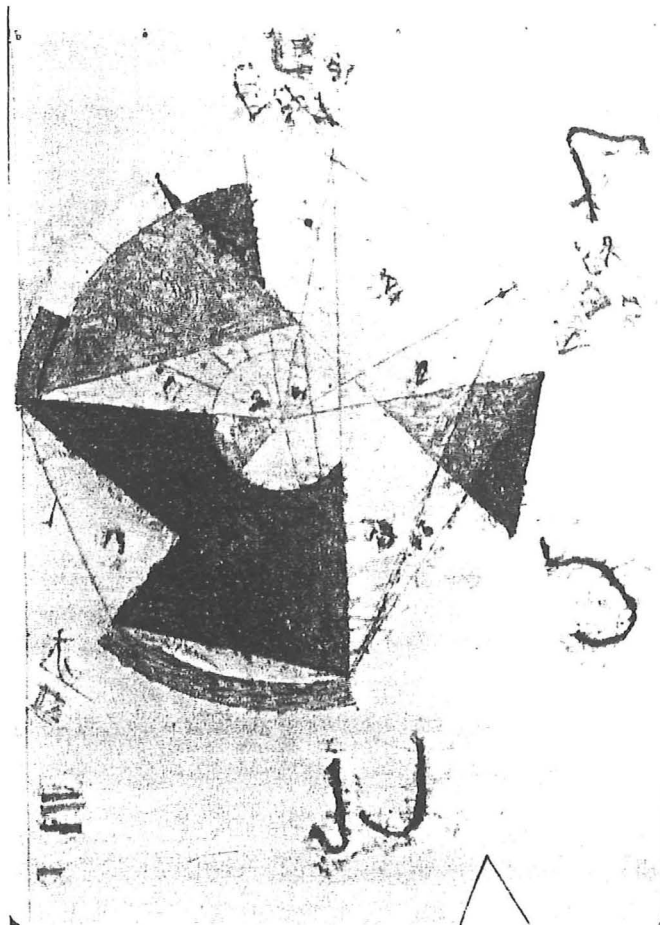
17. Ticket

3490 x 1825

c.1978

Oil on unstretched canvas

Waikato Museum of Art and History, Hamilton.



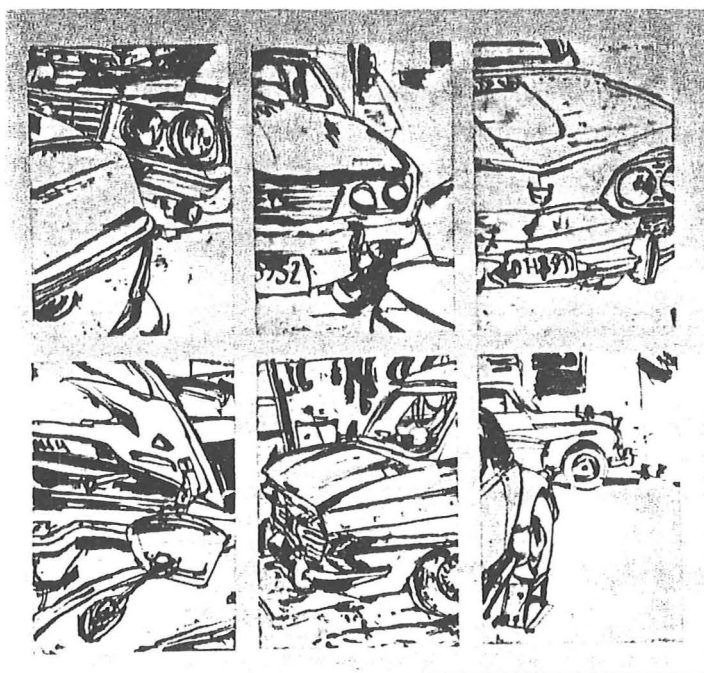
18.Darts

2492 x 1800

c.1978-79

Acrylic on unstretched canvas

Private Collection.



¹⁹Car Drawings (set of six images)

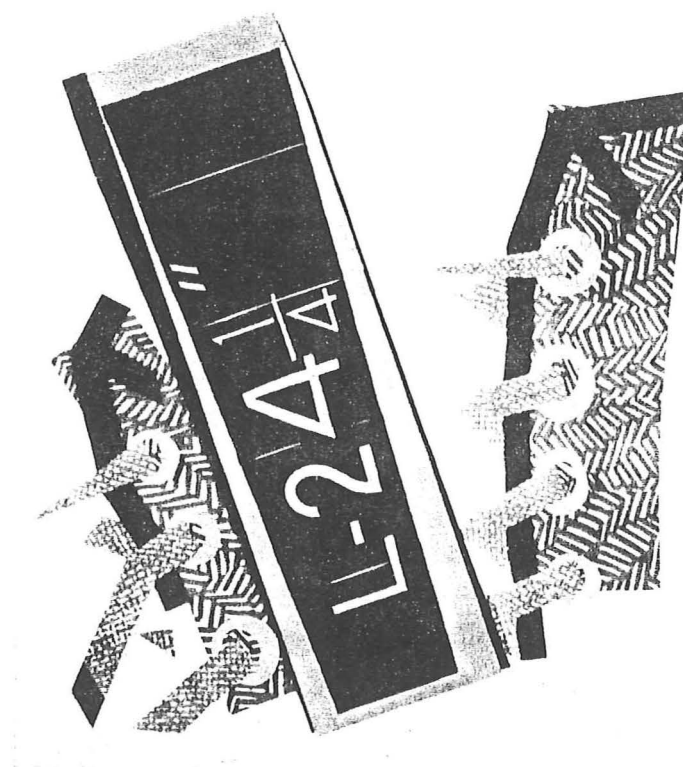
355 x 205

1980

Ink on paper

Trusttun Loan Collection

Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui.



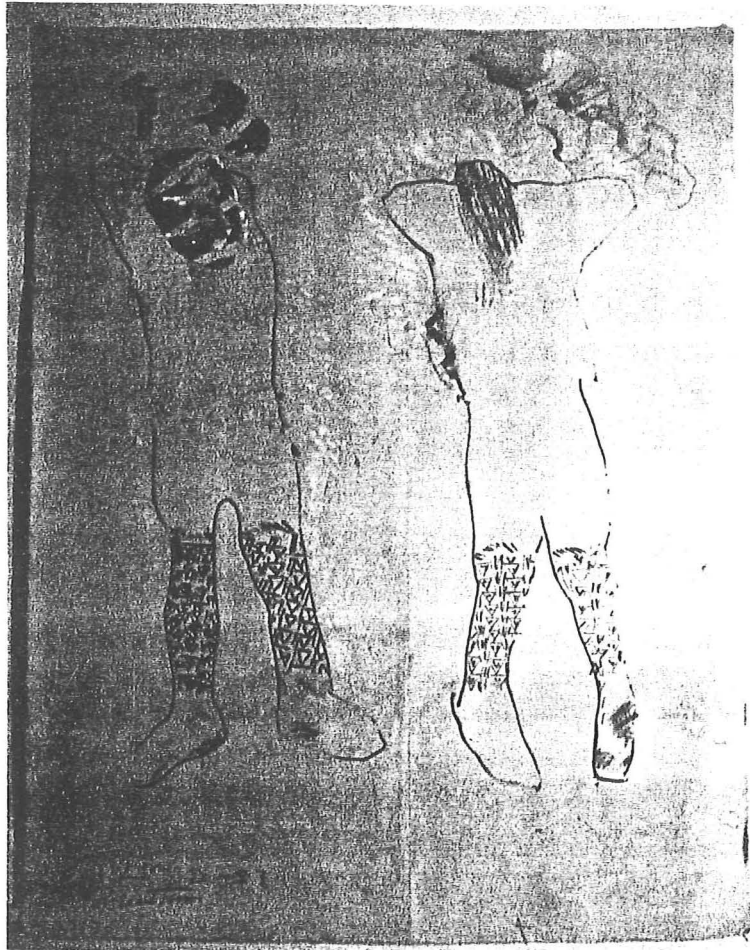
20.L-24 1/4"

approx. 3284 x 3048

c.1981-82

Gouache on goatskin paper

National Art Gallery, Wellington.



21. **Dreaming**

2340 x 1820

1983

Acrylic on unstretched canvas

Philip Trusttum.



224 : 15

2900 x 1900

1983

Mixed media on unstretched canvas

Philip Trusttum.



²³Book of Dreams

2224 x 1834

1984

Acrylic on loose canvas with pieces attached with velcro

Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui.

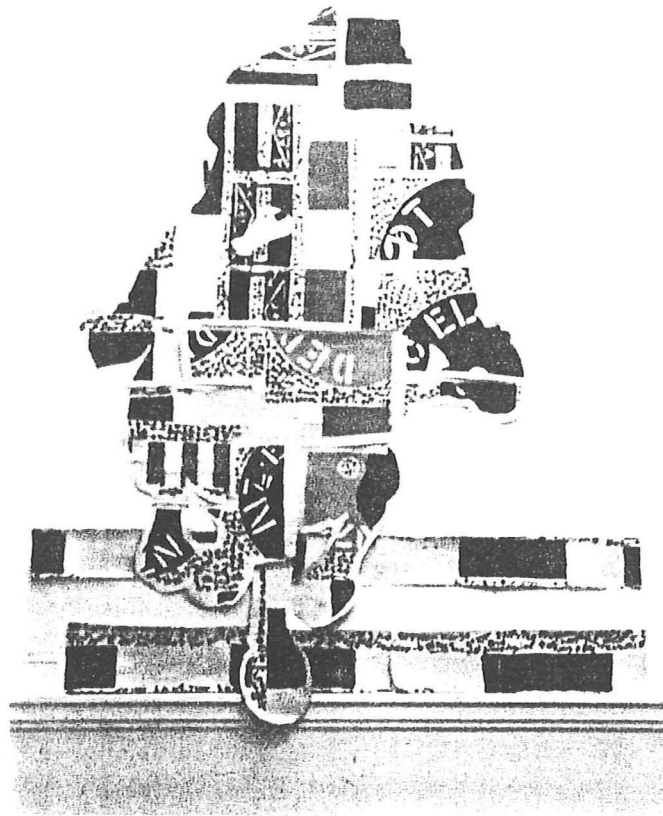


24. Woman, From My View (series of eight images)

1985

Acrylic on unstretched canvas

Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui.



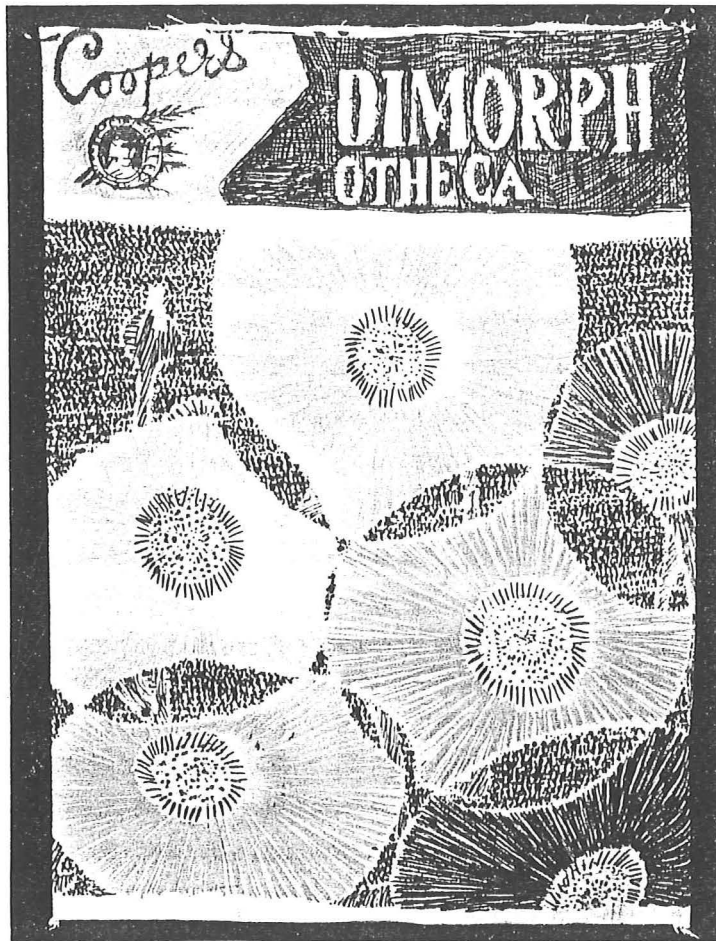
²⁵Slightly Altered

3500 x 2540

c.1985-86

Acrylic on 1202 canvas

Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui.



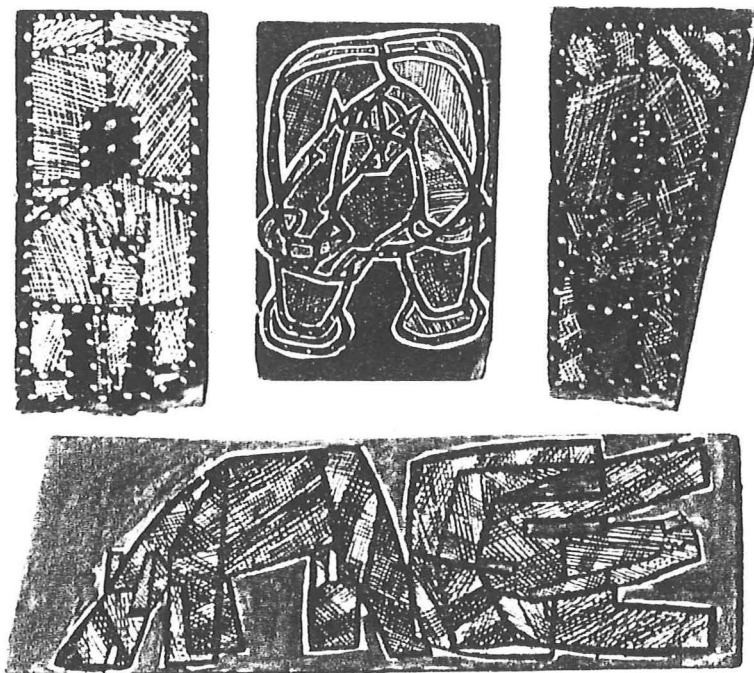
26. *Dimorphotheca* (front view) 1170 x 850

1986

Acrylic on paper (both sides)

Trusttun Loan Collection

Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui.

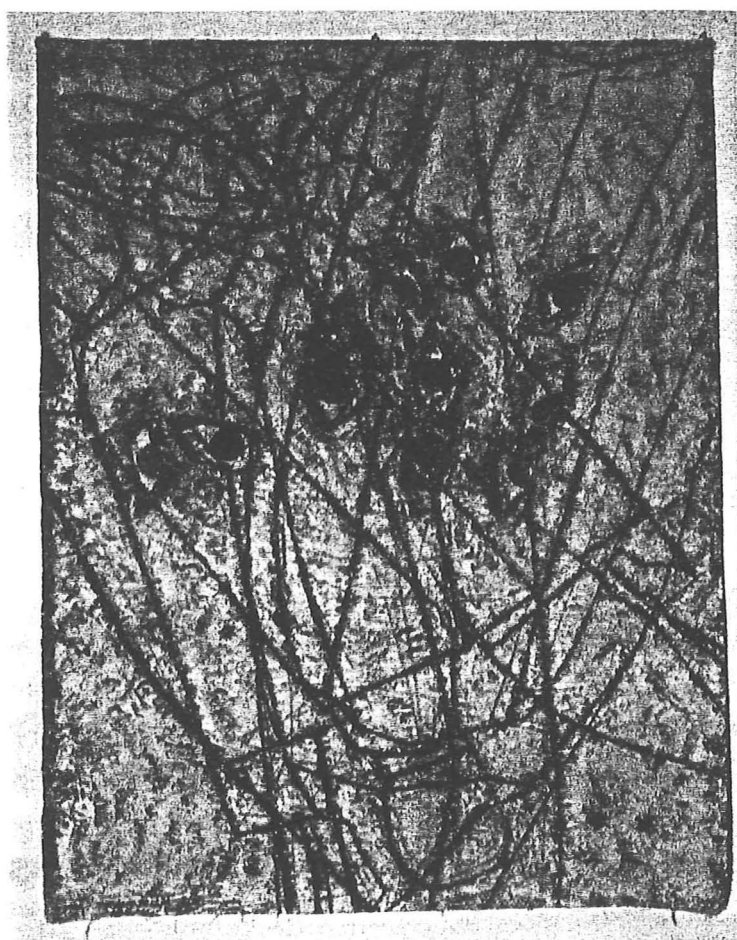


27. Untitled (Cropping Horse Studies), (set of four images)

1987

Acrylic on pinnex

Private Collection.



²⁸Jewelled Horse

2350 x 1840

c.1987-88

Acrylic and chalk on canvas

Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch.



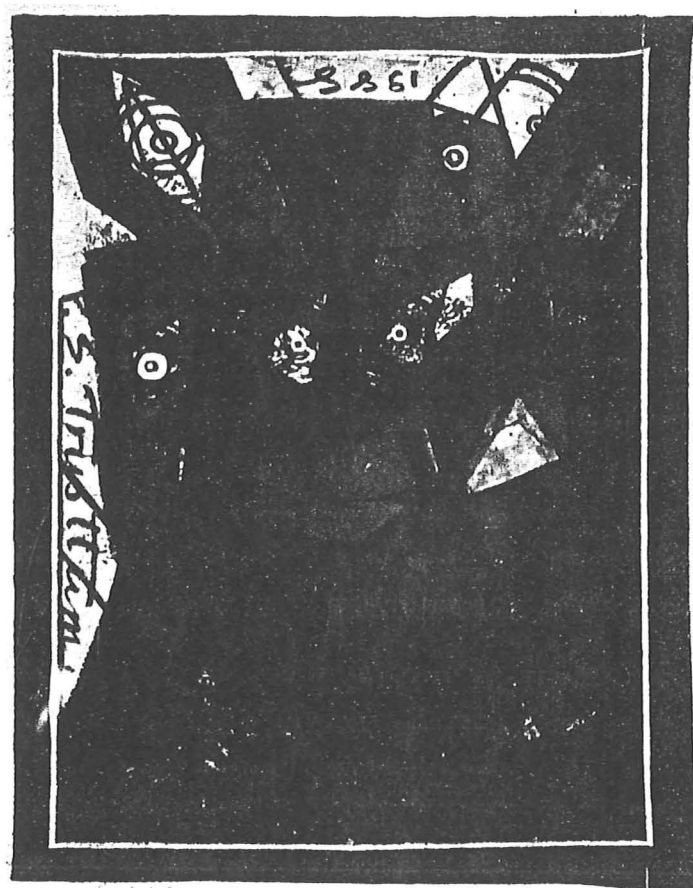
29. Over Poles

2795 x 3350

1988

Acrylic on unstretched canvas

Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui.

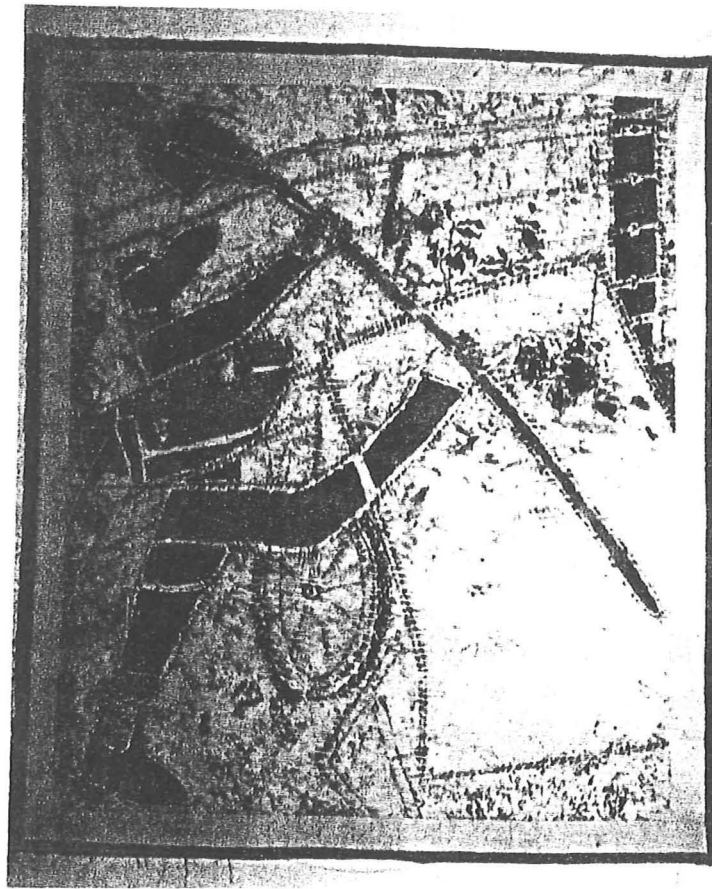


30.2 Faced 2690 x 2090

1988

Acrylic on unstretched canvas

Philip Trusttum.



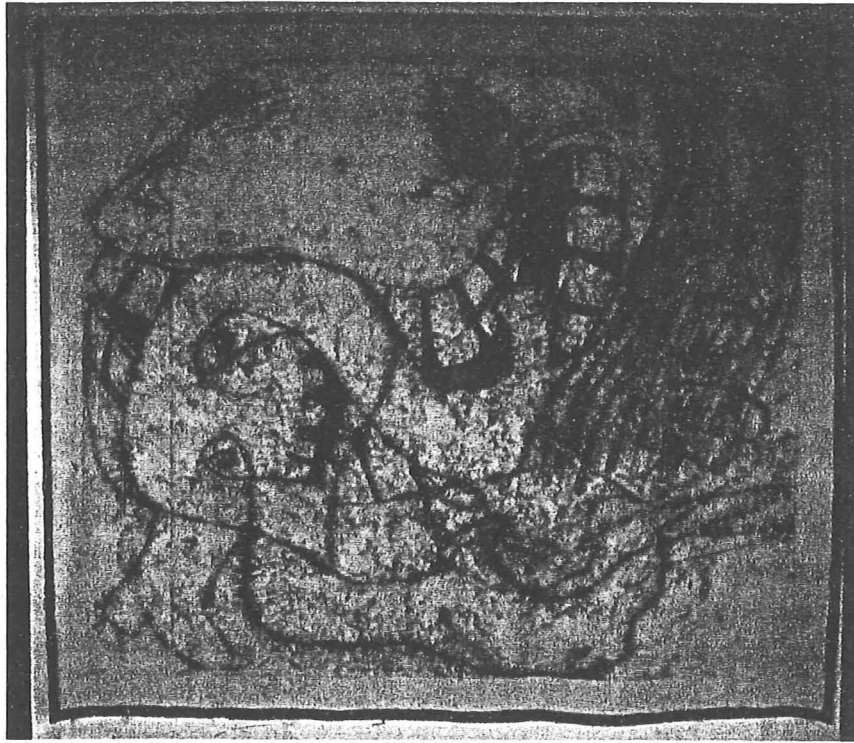
31. **Me**

2030 x 1720

1989

Acrylic on unstretched canvas

Philip Trusttum.



32. **Cutting Tail**

2070 x 2350

1990 _

Acrylic and chalk on unstretched canvas

Philip Trusttum.



33. Cutting Canvas 2080 x 1180

10/7/1990

Acrylic on unstretched canvas

Philip Trusttum.

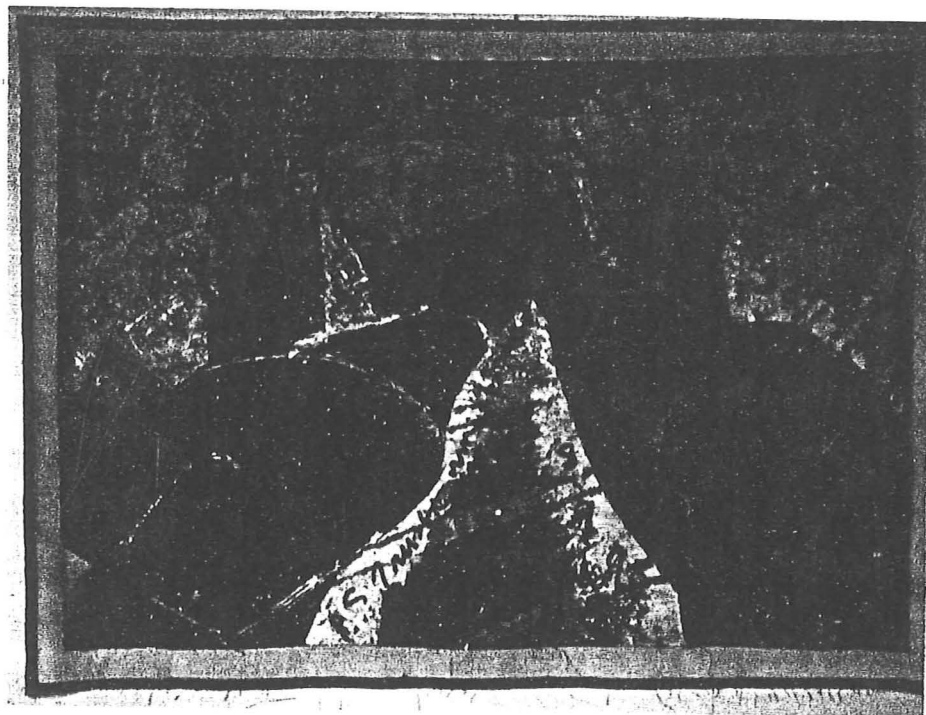


³⁴.Digging 2000 x 820

23/8/1990

Mixed media on unstretched canvas

Philip Trusttum.



35. **Glimpse** 1420 x 1970

18/9/1990

Mixed media on unstretched canvas

Philip Trusttum.